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.....Chaucer Society.....  
Through  
.....Prof. F. F. Child.....

.....19 Sept, 1891.....















# The Chaucer Society.

*Editor in Chief*:—Dr F. J. FURNIVALL, 3, St George's Square, Primrose Hill.  
*Hon. Sec.*:—W. A. DALZIEL, Esq., 67, Victoria Road, Finsbury Park, London.

## THE CHAUCER SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

To do honour to CHAUCER, and to let the lovers and students of him see how far the best unprinted Manuscripts of his works differ from the printed texts, this Society was founded in 1868. There were then, and are still, many questions of metre, pronunciation, orthography, and etymology yet to be settled, for which more printed Manuscripts were and are wanted; and it is hardly too much to say that every MS of Chaucer contains points that need reconsideration. The founder (Dr. Furnivall) began with *The Canterbury Tales*, and has given of them (in parallel columns, Royal 4to) six of the best theretofore unprinted Manuscripts known. Inasmuch as the parallel arrangement necessitated the alteration of the places of certain tales in some of the MSS, a print of each MS has been issued separately, following the order of its original. The first six MSS printed have been: the Ellesmere (by leave of the Earl of Ellesmere); the Hengwrt (by leave of W. W. E. Wynne, Esq.); the Camb. Univ. Libr., MS Gg. 4. 27; the Corpus, Oxford; the Petworth (by leave of Lord Leconfield); and the Lansdowne 851 (Brit. Mus.). The Harleian 7334 has followed.

Of Chaucer's *Minor Poems*,—the MSS of which are generally later than the best MSS of the *Canterbury Tales*,—all the available MSS have been printed, so as to secure all the existing evidence for the true text.

The *Troilus* Parallel-Text from the 3 best MSS has been issued, and a 4th MS text of it with the englight Boccaccio Comparison.

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To secure the fidelity and uniform treatment of the texts, Dr F. J. Furnivall has read and will read all with their MSS.

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Messrs Trübner & Co., of 57 & 59, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., are the Society's publishers, Messrs R. Clay and Sons of Bungay its printers, and the Alliance Bank, Bartholomew Lane, London, E.C., its bankers. The yearly subscription, which constitutes Membership, is two guineas, due on every 1st January, beginning with Jan. 1, 1868. *More Members are wanted. All the Society's Publications can still be had. Those of the first year have been reprinted.*

Prof. Child, of Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the Society's Honorary Secretary for America. Members' names and subscriptions may be sent to the Publishers, or to the Honorary Secretary.

W. A. DALZIEL, Esq., 67, Victoria Road, Finsbury Park, London, N.

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The Society's issue for 1868, in the First Series, is,

- I. The Prologue and Knight's Tale, of the *Canterbury Tales*, in 6 parallel Texts (from the 6 MSS named below), together with Tables, showing the Groups of the Tales, and their varying order in 38 MSS of the Tales, and in 5 old printed editions, and also Specimens from several MSS of the "Moveable Prologues" of the *Canterbury Tales*,—The Shipman's Prologue, and Franklin's Prologue,—when moved from their right places, and of the Substitutes for them. (The Six-Text, Part I.)

II. The Prologue and Knight's Tale from the Ellesmere MS.						Part I.
III.	"	"	"	"	"	Hengwrt " 154 " "
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(separate issues of the Texts forming Part I of the Six-Text edition.)

The issue for 1869, in the First Series, is,

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XII.	"	"	"	"	"	"
XIII.	"	"	"	"	"	"

(separate issues of the Texts forming the Six

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 appendix of  
 "namely"  
 from  
 six MSS.

The Harleyian MS 7334

of

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.



THE  
**Harleian MS 7334**  
OF  
**Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.**

EDITED BY  
**FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.**

LONDON:  
PUBLISHED FOR THE CHAUCER SOCIETY BY  
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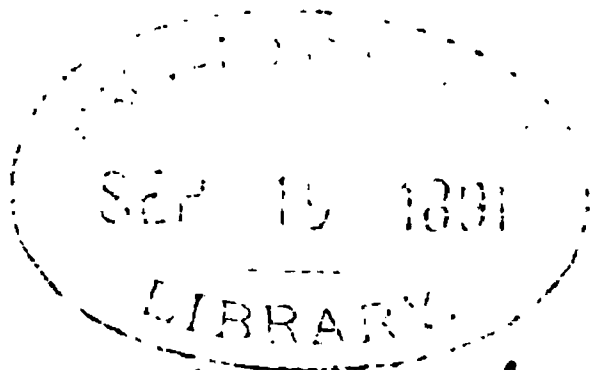
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TO

**The Lovers of Chaucer,**

**PAST, PRESENT,**

**AND**

**TO COME.**

First Series,  
LXXIII.

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*R. Clay and Sons, Bungay, Suffolk.*



## FOREWORDS.

WHEN thinking in 1868 what were the six best MSS of the Canterbury Tales to print in my *Six-Text* for the Chaucer Society, the Harleian 7334 was of course one of the first that occurred to me. But as it had been printed twice by the late Thomas Wright—in 3 vols. for the Percy Society, and then in cheap double-column,—then by Mr. Jephson for the late Robert Bell's Series of English Poets (published by Jn. Wm. Parker), and a fourth time by my friend Dr. Richard Morris for George Bell's Aldine Series,<sup>1</sup> I decided to let these four printings suffice for the Harleian 7334, and so get a fresh MS (which proved to be of the B-type) into print among my Six. It was not a wise decision, as there are too many of the Corpus or B-type already in the Six-Text, and I have unluckily filled up gaps in the better A-type MSS—Ellesmere, Hengwrt, and Cambridge—with extracts from B-type ones, though in several cases the Christchurch A-type MS was open to me. But when I started Chaucer work, I didn't know even the little that the course of it has taught me. (Still, as investigation of the niceties of Early English goes on, probably no student will blame me for having printed one more MS of *The Canterbury Tales*. And though collators' curses for the amount of labour I've thrown on them have already fallen thickly upon me, I always assure these Balaams that they'll bless me when their work is done.)

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Bell meant at first simply to reprint Pickering's text of Chaucer's Poetical Works, but, on my strong remonstrance as to its badness, Mr. Bell agreed to engage Dr. Morris to re-edit the whole from MSS.

Well, when Editors began to edit Chaucer's Tales, and wanted to know what the reading of Harleian 7334 is, they often found some italics in Dr. Morris's text, showing that he'd altered his MS; and as his publisher wouldn't let him give various readings, a reference to the MS became necessary. This was a great bore, specially when a man lived in Germany or America. Moreover, my friend Prof. Child meant his foundation-Essay on Chaucer's language and metre to be based on the MS Harl. 7334, and not on any Editor's changes of it, whether right or wrong. So it gradually became plain that a simple print of this MS must be done for the Chaucer Society. And here accordingly it is. It is as accurate as twice reading of every line with the MS by me can make it; but no doubt little slips have happened: they always will befall.

The MS is dear to the soul of HENRY BRADSHAW and all concerned in the due order of the Canterbury Tales, because it has, at the end of the First Fragment of Group B—the Man of Law's Tale—the proper Man-of-Law-Shipman Link, which should hook it on to the Second Fragment that the Shipman's Tale heads. No Shipman's Tale and Fragment 2 however follow it—but instead, Group D,—Wife, Friar, Summoner,—then Groups E, F, G, C,—and after these, the wanting Second Fragment of B, though without its genuine End-Link.

The MS is of an independent type, not falling into either the edited A-type or the inferior B-type to which the Corpus, Petworth, and Lansdowne belong, in the main. It is perhaps, by a few years, the oldest extant MS of the Tales, and contains an excellent text, tho' its occasional plurals in *us* and its past tenses and participles in *ud*, together with its loss of 608 lines out of Group F (lines 617—1223, or 8 leaves<sup>1</sup> of the MS from l. 271 of the Squire's Tale, all the Squire-Miller Link, and then lines

<sup>1</sup> The MS has thirty-eight lines to a page, or 608 lines in the 16 pages.

1—487 of the Franklin's Tale, p. 354-5 below, Harl. paging), render it less fitted for the basis of a complete edition of *The Canterbury Tales* than the fine illuminated Ellesmere MS.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Harl. 7334 sticks 8 spurious lines—2004 b, c; 2012 b, c; 2037 b, c; 2048 b, c,—p. 113-14, into the Summoner's Tale, and one, l. 592 (p. 114) into the Squire's Tale. It also has not 2 lines, A 252 b, c, in the General Prolog, p. 8; 2 in the Cook's Tale, A 4375-6, p. 127; and 8 at the end of the Cook's Tale, A 4415—4422, p. 128; 7 lines in the Knight's Tale, A 2013-18, p. 58, A 2958, p. 84; 2 lines in the Miller's Tale, A 3721-2, p. 106; 2 in the Reeve-Cook Link (A 4355, 4358, p. 125-6; 4 lines altered into two); one line in the Man of Law's Tale, B 417, p. 113, and five at the end of the Man of Law's End-Link, B 1186—1190, p. 117; thirty lines in the Wife's Preamble, D 575—584, 605—612, 619—626, 717—720, p. 118-119, 114; eight in the Second Nun's Tale, G 155, 210—216, p. 124, 124; the 8 genuine Ellesmere lines<sup>2</sup> in the Franklin's Tale, 1455-6, 1493-8, p. 114-115, besides leaving out 2 lines (2356-7, p. 133) in the Merchant's Tale,<sup>3</sup> four (299-300, 305-6, p. 111) in the Doctor-Pardoner Link, two in the Pardoner's Tale, C 478-9 (p. 118); five in the Shipman's Tale, B 1355 (p. 178) and B 1376-9 (p. 178); one in Sir Thopas, B 1995 (p. 191); about a dozen of prose (trebles) in Melibe,<sup>4</sup> one stanza of 8 in the Monk's Tale, B 3213-20 (p. 131), four lines in the Nun's Priest's Tale, 4136-7 (p. 186), 4478-9 (p. 196), and all its End Link, 16 lines, (for which see p. 694,) and about 23 treble ones in the Parson's Tale: see the gaps in pages 193-194 as you

<sup>1</sup> The Ellesmere has not the Man-of-Law-Shipman Link which Harl. 7334 has.

<sup>2</sup> No other MS yet examined by me has these 8 lines.

<sup>3</sup> Lines like these, due to the scribe's jumping from one 'sight' to the other, might well have been dotted differently in the print, so as to show the jump.

<sup>4</sup> B 2252-3 (p. 288), 2264 (p. 288), 2432, 2444 (p. 298-299, 2623-4 (p. 308-309), part of 2646-7 (p. 308), 2708 (p. 311), part of 2726, 2730, 2741 (p. 314-315), part of 2854 (315), 3034 (p. 349).

turn over the leaves. Altogether, at least, 760 lines are wanting in Harl. 7334 : a serious loss.<sup>1</sup> But on the other hand, this Harl. 7334 puts lines 1307-8 of Group D, the Friar's Tale, in their right place, on p. 474 instead of their wrong one as lines 1293-5 of the Wife-Friar Link, on p. 471.

That in some cases the Harl. readings are not so good as those of the Ellesmere, I showed in my article 'Recent<sup>2</sup> Work at Chaucer' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for March 1874 ; but I admitted that in other instances the Harleian readings were the better. Of the MSS which contain the spurious 'Tale of Gamelyn'—the A-type ones don't—Prof. Skeat found Harl. 7334 much the best. See his 1s. 6d. edition of *Gamelyn* for the Clarendon Press.

I once hoped to have edited the *Tales* and all Chaucer either with Mr. Bradshaw or alone ; but alas, what with the Philological Soc., and occasional work for its Dictionary, Early English Texts and Wyclif, Shakspeare and his Quartos and Folios, Browning and Shelley Societies, Sculling-Fours, Kangaroo bicycles, evenings out, and general laziness, I fear that edition must be left for some more learned and energetic person than myself. Let it suffice that the Chaucer Society has cleared the way for the coming man. I am due now at our Rowing-Club Dance.

*British Museum,*

*Friday, Jan. 8, 1886, 7.30 p.m., under the Electric Light.*

<sup>1</sup> The Harl. 7334 also has not the (?) original but rejected End-Link to the Clerk's Tale, p. 477, of the Ellesmere MS.

<sup>2</sup> The epithet of Sir G. Grove, the then Editor. I wanted 'late.

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<sup>1</sup> It has not the Friar lines 252 *b, c* of the Hengwrt MS.

<sup>2</sup> Eight genuine lines, 4415—4422, are left out here.

<sup>3</sup> Five genuine lines at the end are left out, 1186—1190.

Group		Six-Text pages	Harl. pages
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<sup>1</sup> The ordinary lines G. 1295-6 of this Link which are wrongly shifted in the Six-Texts, &c. (p. 371) from *The Friar's Tale*, of which they form lines G. 1307-8, p.  $\frac{473}{473}$ , are put in their right place on p.  $\frac{471}{471}$ , by the Harl. MS 7334.

<sup>2</sup> Eight spurious lines, D. 2004 *b, c*; 2012 *b, c*; 2037 *b, c*; 2048 *b, c*, p.  $\frac{424}{424}$  are stuck into Harl. 7334.

<sup>3</sup> The stanzas of this are in their right order.

<sup>4</sup> The end of what there is, is out of the Harl. MS, as 8 leaves of the MS are missing here, p.  $\frac{496}{496}$ — $\frac{504}{504}$ .

Group		Six-Text pages	Harl. pages
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<sup>1</sup> Four lines, 299-300 and 305-6, are left out in this.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Richard Morris was the first to track this to its source in one of the Buddhist Jataka Tales. He englisht it long ago for me, and mentiond the Eastern source in his article in *The Contemporary Review*, May 1881, p. 728—749.

<sup>3</sup> For B § 1—3 see Man-of-Law's Head-Link, Tale and End-Link, p.  $\frac{1}{2}\frac{2}{3}$ , above.

<sup>4</sup> The four 'modern instances'—1. Peter (the Cruel) of Spain, 2. Peter of Cyprus, 3. Barnabo Visconti of Milan, and 4. Ugolino, Count of Pisa—are rightly put after Zenobia, l. 3564, p.  $\frac{3}{4}\frac{4}{5}$ , and not at the end of the Tale as in the Ellesmere and other A MSS, p. 500-3 Elles. But one stanza is missing, B 3213-20, p.  $\frac{1}{4}\frac{7}{8}$ .

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# GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

## § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

**HARLEIAN MS. 7334** (British Museum).

---

**W**Han that aprille with his schowres swoote [leaf 1]  
The drought of Marche hap perced to þe roote  
And bathud euery veyne in swich licour  
Of which vertue engendred is þe flour 4  
whan zephirus eek with his swete breeth  
Enspirud hath in euery holte and heeth  
The tendre croppes and þe yonge sonne  
hath in the Ram his halfe cours I-ronne 8  
And smale fowles maken melodie  
That slepen al þe night wiþ open yhe  
So prikeþ hem nature in here corages  
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages 12  
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes  
To ferne halwes kouthe in sondry londes  
And specially from euery schires ende  
Of Engelond to Canturbury þey wende 16  
The holy blisful martir for to seeke  
That hem hap holpen whan þat þey were seeke  
**B**yfel þat in þat sesoun on a day  
In Southwerk at þe Tabbard as I lay 20  
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage  
To Canturbury with ful deuout corage  
At night was come in to þat hostelrie  
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye 24  
Of sondry folk by auenture I-falle  
In felaschipe and pilgryms were þei alle  
That toward Canturbury wolden ryde

2 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE Harleian 7334.

The Chambres and þe stables weren wyde 28  
 And wel we weren esud atte beste  
 And schortly whan þe sonne was to reste  
 So hadde I spoken with hem euerychon  
 That I was of here felawschipe anon 32  
 And made forward erly to a Ryse  
 To take oure weye ther as I ȝow deuyse  
 But natheles whiles I haue tyme and space  
 Or þat I ferþere in þis tale pace 36  
 Me þinkeþ it acordant to resoun  
 To telle ȝow alle þe condicioun  
 Of eche of hem so as it semed me [leaf 1, back]  
 And which þey weren and of what degre 40  
 And eek in what array þat þey were Inne  
 And at a knight than wol I first bygynne  
**A** Knight þer was and þat a worþy man  
 That from þe tyme þat he ferst bigan 44  
 To ryden out he louede Chyualrye  
 Trouthe and honour fredom and curtesie  
 Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre  
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 As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse  
 And euere honoured for his worþinesse  
 At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne  
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde þe bord bygonne / 52  
 Abouen alle naciouns in pruce  
 In lettowe hadde Reyced and in Ruce  
 No cristen man so ofte of his degre  
 In Gernade atte siege hadde he be 56  
 At Algesir and riden in Belmarie  
 At lieys was he and at Satalie  
 At many a noble ariue hadde he be  
 whan þey were wonne and in þe greeete see 60  
 At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene  
 And foughten for oure feith at Tramassene  
 In lystes þries and ay slayn his foo

GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334. 3

This ilke worþi knight hadde ben also 64

Somtyme with þe lord of Palatye

Ageyn anoper hethene in Turkye

And eueremore he hadde a souereyn prys

And þough he was worþy he was wys 68

And of his port as meke as a mayde

he neuer ȝit no vilonye ne sayde

In al his lyf vnto no maner wight

he was a verray perfyt gentil knight 72

But for to telle ȝou of his array

his hors was good but he ne was nouȝt gay

Of fustyan he wered a Gepoun

Al by smoterud with his haburgeoun 76

For he was late comen from his viage

[leaf 2]

And wente for to doon his pilgrimage

**W**ith him þer was his sone a ȝong squyer

A louyer and a lusty bachelor 80

With lokkes crulle as þey were layde in presse

Of twenty ȝeer he was of age I gesse

Of his stature he was of euene lengthe

And wondurly delyuer and gret of strengthe 84

And he hadde ben som tyme in Chiuachie

In Flaundres in Artoys and in Picardie

And born him wel as in so litel space

In hope to stonden in his lady grace / 88

Embrowdid was he as it were a mede /

Al ful of fresshe floures white and reede

Syngynge he was or flowtynge al þe day

he was as fressh as is the moneth of may 92

Schort was his goune with sleeues long and wyde

wel cowde he sitte on hors and wel cowde he ryde

he cowde songes wel make and endite

Iustne and eek daunce and wel purtray and write 96

So hote he louede þat by nightertale

he sleep nomore þan doþ a nightyngale

Curteys he was lowly and seruyable

4 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334.

And carf byforn his fadur at þe table / 100

**A** ȝeman had he / and seruanter nomoo  
At þat tyme for him lust ryde soo  
And he was clad in coote and hood of grene  
A shef of pocok arwes bright and kene 104

vnder his belte he bar ful þriftily  
wel cowde he dresse his takel ȝomanly  
His arwes drowpud nouȝt wip fetheres lowe  
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe 108

A not heed hadde he wip a broun visage  
Of woode craft cowde he wel al þe vsage  
vpon his arme he bar a gay bracer  
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler 112

And on þat oþer side a gay daggere  
harneysed wel and scharp as poynt of spere  
A cristofre on his brest of siluer schene [leaf 2, back]  
An horn he bar þe bawdrik was of grene 116

A forster was he sothely as I gesse  
**T**her was also a Nonne a prioresse  
That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy  
hire grettest ooth nas but by seynt loy 120

And sche was clept / madame Englentyne  
Ful wel sche sang þe seruise deuyne  
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly  
And frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly 124

Aftur þe scole of Stratford atte Bowe  
For frensch of Parys was to hire vnknowe  
At mete wel I-taught was sche with alle  
Sche leet no morsel from hire lippes falle 128

Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe  
wel cowde sche carie a morsel and wel keepe  
That no drope fil vppon hire brest  
In Curtesie was sett al hire lest 132

hire ouerlippe wypud sche so clene  
That in hire Cuppe was no ferþing sene  
Of gres whan sche dronken hadde hire draught

Ful semely aftur hir mete sche raught 136  
 And sikurly sche was of gret disport  
 And ful plesant/ and amyable of port  
 And peyned hire to counterfete cheere  
 Of court and ben estatlich of manere 140  
 And to ben holden digne of Reuerence  
 But for to speken of hire conscience  
 Sche was so charitable and so pitous  
 Sche wolde weepe if þat sche sawe a Mous 144  
 Caught in a trappe if it were deed or bledde  
 Of smale houndes hadde sche þat sche fedde  
 With rostud fleissch and mylk and wastel breed  
 But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed 148  
 Or if men smot it wip a 3erde smerte  
 And al was conscience and tendre herte  
 Ful semely hire wymple I-pynched was  
 Hire nose streight hire eyen grey as glas 152  
 Hire mouth ful smal and þerto softe and reed [leaf 3]  
 But sikurly sche hadde a fair forheed  
 It was almost a spanne brood I trowe  
 For hardily sche was not vndurgrowe 156  
 Ful fetys was hire cloke as I was waar  
 Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar  
 A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene  
 And þer on heng a broch of gold ful schene 160  
 On which was first I-writen a crowned A.  
 And after þat Amor vincit omnia.  
 Anothur Nonne with hire hadde sche  
 That was hire Chapelleyn and prestes þre 164  
**A** Monk þer was a fair for the maistrie  
 An out Rydere þat loved venerye  
 A manly man to ben an abbot able  
 Ful many a deynte hors hadde he in stable 168  
 And whan he rood men might his bridel heere  
 Gyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere  
 And eek as lowde as dop þe chapel belle

6 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334.

Ther as þe lord was keper of þe selle 172  
 The Reule of seynt maure or of seint Beneyt  
 By cause þat it was old and somdel streyt  
 This ilke monk leet forþy hem pace  
 And helde aftur þe newe world þe space 176  
 he ȝaf nat of þat text a pulled hen  
 That seiþ þat hunters been noon holy men  
 Ne þat a monk whan he is Cloysterles  
 Is likned to a fische þat is watirles 180  
 This is to seyn a monk out of his cloystre  
 But þilke text hild he not werþ an oystre /  
 And I seide his opinioun was good  
 what schulde he studie and make himseluen wood 184  
 Vppon a book in Cloystre alway to powre  
 Or swynke with his handes and laboure  
 As Austyn byt // how schal þe world be serued  
 lat austyn haue his swynk to him reserued 188  
 Therefore he was a pricasour aright  
 Greyhoundes he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight  
 Of prikyng and of huntyng for þe hare [leaf 3, back]  
 was al his lust for no cost wolde he spare 192  
 I saugh his sleues purfiled atte hond  
 wiþ grys and that þe fynest of a lond  
 And for to festne his hood vndur his chyn  
 he hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pyn 196  
 A loue knotte in þe gretter ende þer was  
 His heed was ballid and schon as eny glas  
 And eek his face as he hadde be anoynt  
 he was a lord ful fat and in good poynt 200  
 his eyen steep and rolyng in his heed  
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed  
 His bootes souple his hors in gret estat  
 Now certainly he was a fair prelat 204  
 he was not pale as a for-pyned goost  
 A fat swan loued he best of eny roost  
 His palfray was as brown as eny berye

**A** Frere þer was a wantoun and a merye 208  
 A lymytour a ful solempne man  
 In alle the ordres foure is noon þat can  
 So moche of daliaunce and fair langage  
 He hadde I-made many a fair mariage 212  
 Of 3onge wymmen at his owne cost  
 vnto his ordre he was a noble post  
 Ful wel biloued and famulier was he  
 with Frankeleyns ouer al in his cuntre 216  
 And eek with worpi wommen of þe toun  
 For he hadde power of confessioun  
 As seyde himself more þan a curat  
 For of his ordre he was licenciат/ 220  
 Ful sweetly herde he confessioun  
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun  
 He was an esy man to 3eue penance  
 Ther as he wiste han a good pitance 224  
 For vnto a poure ordre for to 3eue  
 Is signe þat a man is wel I-schreue  
 For if he 3af he dorste make auaunt  
 He wiste þat a man was repentaunt 228  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte [leaf 4]  
 He may not wepe þough him sore smerte  
 Therefore in stede of wepyng and prayeres  
 Men mooten 3iuen siluer to þe pore freres 232  
 His typet was ay farsud ful of knyfes  
 And pynnes for to 3iue faire wyfes  
 And certayn he hadde a mery noote  
 wel couthe he synge and pleye on a Rote 236  
 Of 3eddynges he bar vturly þe prys  
 his nekke whit was as þe flour delys  
 Ther to he strong was as a Champioun  
 He knew wel þe tauernes in euery toun 240  
 And euery Ostiller or gay tapstere  
 Bet þan a lazer or a beggere  
 For vnto such a worpi man as he

8 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334.

Acorded not as by his faculte 244  
 To haue with sike lazars aqueyntaunce  
 It is not honest it may not avaunce  
 For to delen with such poraile  
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille 248  
 And ouer al per eny profyt schulde arise  
 Curteys he was. and lowe of seruyse  
 Ther was no man no wher so vertuous  
 He was þe beste begger in al his hous 252  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 For þough a widewe hadde but oo schoo  
 So plesaunt was his In principio  
 3et wolde he haue a ferthing or he wente  
 his purchace was bettur þan his rente 256  
 And rage he coupe and pleye as a whelpe  
 In loue-dayes ther couthe he mochil helpe  
 For þer was he not like a cloysterer  
 With a thred-bare cope as a pore scoler 260  
 But he was like a maister or a pope  
 Of double worstede was his semy cope /  
 That rounded was as a belle out of presse  
 Somwhat he lippede for wantounesse / 264  
 To make his Englissch swete vpon his tunge  
 And in his harpyng whan þat he hadde sunge  
 His eyzen twynkeled in his heed aright [leaf 4, back]  
 As don þe sterres in þe frosty night 268  
 This worthi lymytour was called huberd  
 A Marchaunt was þer wip a forked berd  
 In motteleye high on horse he sat  
 vppon his heed a Flaundrisch beuer hat/ 272  
 His botus clapsud faire and fetously  
 His resons he spak ful solempnely  
 Swownynge alway the encres of his wynnynge  
 He wolde þe see were kepud for eny þing 276  
 Bitwixe Middulburgh and Orewelle /



wel coupe he in eschange scheeldes selle /  
 This worpi man ful wel his witte bisette  
 Ther wiste no man that he was in dette 280

So estately was he of gouernaunce  
 with his bargayns and with his cheuysaunce  
 For sothe he was a worpi man with alle  
 Bot soth to say I not what men him calle / 284

**A** Clerk per was of Oxenford also  
 That vnto logik hadde longe I-go  
 Al so lene was his hors as is a rake  
 And he was not right fat I vndertake 288

But lokede holwe and perto soburly  
 Ful thredbare was his ouerest courtepy  
 For he hadde nouȝt geten hym ȝit a benefice  
 Ne was not worpy to hauen an office 292

For him was leuer haue at his beddes heed  
 Twenty bookes cloped in blak and reed  
 Of Aristotil and of his philosophie  
 Then Robus Riche or fithul or Sawtrie 296

But al þough he were a philosophre  
 ȝet hadde he but litul gold in cofre  
 But al þat he might gete and his frendes sende  
 On bookes and his lernyng he it spende 300

And busily gan for þe soules pray  
 Of hem þat ȝaf him wherwith to scolay  
 Of studie tooke he most cure and heede  
 Not oo word spak he more þan was neede 304

Al þat he spak it was of heye prudence [leaf 5]  
 And schort and quyke and ful of gret sentence  
 Sownynge in moral manere was his speche /  
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche 308

**A** Sergeant of lawe war and wys  
 That often hadde ben atte paruyes  
 Ther was also ful riche of excellence  
 Discret he was and of gret Reucrence 312  
 He semed such his wordes were so wise

10 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334.

Iustice he was fuloften in assise  
 By patent and by pleyn comissioun  
 For his science and for his heih renoun 316  
 Of fees and Robes had he many oon  
 So gret a purchasour was þer no wher noon  
 Al was fee symple to him in effecte  
 his purchasyng might nought ben to hi m suspecte 320  
 No wher so besy a man as he þer nas /  
 And 3it he semed besier þan he was  
 In termes hadde caas and domes alle  
 That fro þe tyme þat kyng were falle 324  
 Ther to he coupe endite and make a þing  
 Ther coupe no man pynche at his writyng  
 And euery statute couthe he pleyn by roote  
 He rood but hoomly in a medled coote 328  
 Gird with a seynt of silk wip barres smale  
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale  
 A Frankeleyn þer was in his companye /  
 whit was his berde as þe dayesye 332  
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn  
 wel loued he in þe morn a sop of wyn  
 To lyue in delite was al his wone  
 For he was Epicurius owne sone 336  
 That heeld opynyoun þat pleyn delyt  
 was verraily felicite perfyt  
 An houshaldere and þat a gret was he  
 Seynt Iulian he was in his countre 340  
 his breed his ale was alway after oon  
 A bettre envyned man was no wher noon.  
 wipoute bake mete was neuer his hous [leaf 5, back]  
 Of fleissch and fisch and þat so plentyuous 344  
 Hit snewed in his hous of mete and drynk  
 Of alle deyntees þat men cowde þynk  
 Aftur þe sondry sesouns of þe 3eer  
 He chaunged hem at mete and at soper 348  
 Ful many a fat partrich had he in mewe

And many a brem and many a luce in stewe  
 Woo was his Cook<sup>t</sup> but if<sup>t</sup> his sauce were  
 Poynant<sup>t</sup> and scharp and redy al his gere 352  
 His table dormant<sup>t</sup> in his halle alway<sup>t</sup>

Stood redy couered al þe longe day  
 At sessions þer was he lord and sire  
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of þe schire 356  
 An Anlas and a gipseer al of<sup>t</sup> silk<sup>t</sup>

heng<sup>t</sup> at his gerdul whit<sup>t</sup> as morne mylk<sup>t</sup>  
 A schirreue hadde he ben and a counter  
 was nowher such a worthi vauaser 360

**A**N haburdassher and a Carpenter  
 A webbe a deyer and a Tapicer  
 weren with vss eeke clothed in oo lyuere  
 Of a solempne and gret<sup>t</sup> fraternite 364

Ful freissh and newe his gere piked was  
 Here knyfes were I-chapud nat<sup>t</sup> with bras  
 But<sup>t</sup> al with siluer wrought<sup>t</sup> ful clene and wel  
 here gurdles and here pouches euery del 368  
 wel semed eche of<sup>t</sup> hem a fair burgeys

To sitten in a 3eldehalle on þe deys  
 Euery man for þe wisdom þat he can  
 was schaply for to ben an aldurman · 372

For Catel hadde þey Inough and rente /  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> here wyfes wolde it<sup>t</sup> wel assente /  
 And elles certeyn hadde þei ben to blame  
 It is right<sup>t</sup> fair for to be clept<sup>t</sup> Ma Dame 376

And for to go to vigilies al byfore  
 And han a mantel rialy I-bore

**A**Cook<sup>t</sup> þei hadde with hem for þe nones  
 To boyle chiknes and þe mary bones 380  
 And poudre marchaunt / tart<sup>t</sup> and galyngale [leaf 6]

wel cowde he knowe a drauȝt<sup>t</sup> of londoun ale  
 He cowde roste sethe boille and frie  
 Make mortreux and wel bake a pye 384  
 But<sup>t</sup> gret<sup>t</sup> harm was it as it<sup>t</sup> semede mo

That on his schyne a mormal hadde he  
 For blankmanger he made with þe beste

**A** Schipman was þer wonyng fer by weste 388  
 For ought I woot he was of Dertemouthe

He rood vpon a rouncy as he couþe  
 In a gowne of faldyng to þe kne

A dagger hangyng on a laas hadde he 392  
 Aboute his nekke vnder his arm a doun

The hote somer had maad his hew al broun  
 And certainly he was a good felawe

Ful many a draught of wyn had he drawe 396  
 From Burdeuxward, whil þat þe chapman sleep

Of nyce conscience took he no keep

If þat he foughte and hadde þe heizer hand

By water he sente hem hoom to euery land 400

But of his craft to rikne wel þe tydes

his stremes and his dangers him bisides

His herbergh and his mone his lodemenage

Ther was non such from hulle to Cartage 404

Hardy he was and wys to vndertake

with many a tempest hath his berd ben schake

He knew wel alle þe hauenes as þei were

From Scotlond to the cape of fynestere 408

And euery Cryk in Bretayne and in Spayne

His Barge y-clepud was the Magdelayne

**T**her was also a Doctour of phisik

In al þis world ne was þer non him lyk 412

To speke of phisik and of Surgerye

For he was groundud in astronomye

he kepte his pacient wondurly wel

In houres by his magik naturel 416

wel cowde he fortune the ascendent

Of his ymages for his pacient

He knew þe cause of euery maladye

[leaf 6, back]

were it of cold or hete or moyst or drye 420

And where þei engendrid and of what humour

he was a verrey parfight' practisour  
 The cause I-knowe and of his harm þe roote  
 Anon he ȝaf þe syke man his boote 424  
 Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries  
 To sende him dragges and his letuaries  
 For eche of hem made opur to wynne  
 Here frendschipe nas not newe to begynne 428  
 wel knew he þe olde Esculapius  
 And deiscorides. and eeke Rusus  
 Old ypocras. haly and Galien  
 Serapyon. Razis and Auycen 432  
 Auerrois damascen and Constantyn  
 Bernad and Gatisden and Gilbertyn  
 Of his diete mesurable was he  
 For it was of no superfluite 436  
 But of gret norisching' and digestible  
 His studie was but litel on þe bible  
 In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al  
 Lyned with taffata and with Sendal 440  
 And ȝit he was but esy in dispenche  
 He kepte þat he wan in pestilence  
 For gold in phisik' is a cordial  
 Ther fore he louede gold in special 444  
 A Good wif was þer of byside bathe  
 But sche was somdel deaf and þat was skape  
 Of cloth makynge sche hadde such an haunt  
 Sche passed hem of ypris and of Gaunt 448  
 In al þe parisshe wyf ne was ther noon  
 That to þe offryng' byforn hire schulde goon  
 And if þer dide certeyn so wroth was sche  
 That sche was þanne out of alle charite 452  
 hire keuerchefs weren ful fyne of grounde  
 I durste swere þey weyȝede ten ponde  
 That on a sonday were vpon hire heed  
 hire hosen were of fyn scarlett reed 456  
 Ful streyte y-teyed and schoos ful moyste and newe [leaf 7]

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Bold was hir face and fair and reed of heewe  
 Sche was a worpy womman al hire lyfe  
 Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe 460  
 withouten opur companye in 3outhē  
 But therof needeth nouȝt to speke as nouthe  
 And pries hadde sche ben at Ierusalem  
 Sche hadde passud many a straunge streem 464  
 At Rome sche hadde ben and at Boloynē  
 In Galice at seynt Iame and at Coloyne  
 Sche cowde moche of wandryng by þe weye  
 Gattothud was sche soply for to seye 468  
 vppon an amblere esely sche sat  
 wymplid ful wel and on hire heed an hat  
 As brood as is a bocler or a Targe  
 A foot mantel aboute hire hupes large 472  
 And on hire feet a paire of spores scharpe  
 In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe  
 Of Remedyes of loue sche knew par chaunce  
 For of þat art sche knew þe olde daunce 476  
**A** Good man was ther of Religioun  
 And was a pore persoun of a town  
 But riche he was of holy þought and werk  
 He was also a lerned man a Clerk 480  
 That cristes gospel gladly wolde preche  
 His parischens deuoutly wold he teche  
 Benigne he was and wondur diligent  
 And in aduersite ful pacient 484  
 And such he was I-proued ofte sithes  
 Ful loth were him to curse for his tythes  
 But raper wolde he ȝeuen out of dowte  
 vnto his pore parisschens aboute 488  
 Of his offrynge and eek of his substaunce  
 he cowde in litel þing han suffisance  
 wyd was his parisch and houses fer asondur  
 But he ne lafte not for reyn ne þondur 492  
 In siknesse ne in meschief to visite

The ferrest in his parissche moche and lite  
 Vppon his feet and in his hond a staf [leaf 7, back]  
 This noble ensample vnto his scheep he 3af 496  
 That ferst he wroughte and after pat he taughte  
 Out of þe gospel he þo wordes caughte /  
 And þis figure he addid 3it þerto  
 That if gold ruste what schulde yren doo ? 500  
 For if a prest be foul on whom we truste  
 No wondur is a lewid man to ruste ;  
 And schame it is if a prest take kepe  
 A schiten schepperd and a clene schepe 504  
 wel oughte a prest ensample for to 3iue  
 By his clenness how pat his scheep schulde lyue  
 he sette not his benefice to huyre  
 And lefte his scheep encombred in þe myre 508  
 And ran to londown vnto seynte poules  
 To seeken him a chaunterie for soules  
 Or with a brethurhede be wip-holde  
 But dwelte at hoom and kepte wel his folde / 512  
 So pat þe wolf ne made it not myscarye  
 He was a schepparde and no mercenarie  
 And pough he holy were and vertuous  
 he was to senful man nought dispitous 516  
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne  
 But in his teching discret and benigne  
 To drawe folk to heuen by clenness  
 By good ensample was his busynesse 520  
 But it were eny parson obstinat  
 what so he were of high or lowe estat  
 him wolde he snybbe scharply for þe nones  
 A better preest I trowe ther nowher non is 524  
 he waytud after no pompe ne reuerence  
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience /  
 But cristes lore and his apostles twelue  
 he taught. and ferst he folwed it himselue 528

**W**ith hem þer was a plough man his broþur

That hadde I-lad of dong' ful many a fopur  
 A trewe swynker and a good was hee  
 Lyuyng in pees and parfyt charitee 532  
 God loued he best' al his trewe herte [leaf 8]  
 At alle tymes pough him gamed or smerte  
 And panne his neighebour right' as himselue  
 He wolde threisshe and perto dyke and delue 536  
 For cristes sake with euery pore wight'  
 wipouten huyre if it laye in his might'  
 His tythes payede he ful faire and wel  
 Bathe of his owne swynk' and his catel 540  
 In a tabbard Rood vpon a mere  
**T**her was also a Reeue and a mellere  
 A sompnour and a pardoner also  
 A maunciple and my self' per was no mo 544 2  
**T**He mellere was a stout' carl for pe nones  
 Full big' he was of braun and eek' of boones /  
 That preuede wel for ouer al per he cam  
 At wrastlyng he wolde bere away pe Ram 548  
 He was schort' schuldred broode a pikke knarre  
 Ther was no dore pat' he nolde heue of harre  
 Or breke it with a rennyng' with his heed  
 his berd as ony sowe or fox was reed 552  
 And perto brood as pough it were a spade  
 vpon pe cop right' of his nose he hade  
 A werte and per on stood a tuft' of heres  
 Reede as pe berstles of a souwes eeres 556  
 his nose-purles blake were and wyde  
 A swerd and a bocler baar he by his side  
 His mouth as wyde was as a gret' forneys  
 he was a Iangler and a golyardeys 560  
 And pat' was most' of synne and harlotries  
 wel cowde he stele corn and tollen pries  
 And zet' he hadde a pombe of golde parde  
 A whizt cote and blewe hood wered he 564  
 A bagge pipe. cowde he blowe and sowne



And þerwip al he brought vs out of towne

**A** Gentil maunciple was ther of a temple  
Of which achatours mighten take exemple 568

For to be wys in beyyng of vitaille

For wheþur þat he payde or took by taille

Algate he wayted so in his acate [leaf 8, back]

That he was ay biforn and in good state 572

Now is not þat of god a ful fair grace

That such a lewed mannes wit schal pace

The wisdom of an heep of lernede men

Of maystres hadde moo þan þries ten 576

That were of lawe expert and curious

Of which þer were a doseyn in an hous

worthi to be stiward of Rente and lond

Of any lord þat is in Engeland 580

To make him lyue by his propre good

In honour detteles but if he were wood

Of lyue as scarsly as he can desire

And able for to helpen al a schire 584

In any caas þat mighte falle or happe

And 3it this maunciple sette here aller cappe

**T**he Reeue was a sklendre colerik man

his berd was schauē as neigh as euer he can 588

his heer was by his Eres neigh I-schorn

his top was dockud lyk a preest biforn

Ful longe wern his leggus and ful lene

Al like a staff ther was no calf y-sene 592

wel cowde he kepe a gerner and a bynne

Ther was non auditour cowde on him wynne

wel wiste he by the drought and by þe Reyn

The 3eeldyng of his seed and of his greyn 596

his lordes scheep his neet his dayerie

his swyn his hors his stoor and his pultrie

was holly in this Reeues gouernynge

And by his couenaunt 3af þe Rekenynge 600

Syn þat his lord was .xx.<sup>th</sup> 3eer of age

18 GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334.

Ther couthe noman bringe him in arrerage  
 Ther nas baillif ne herde ne oper hyne  
 That þey ne knewe his sleight and his couyne 604  
 They were adrad of him as of þe deth  
 his wonyng was ful fair vpon an heth  
 wip grene trees I-schadewed was his place  
 he cowde bettre þan his lord purchace 608  
 Ful riche he was I-stored priuely [leaf 9]  
 His lord wel couthe he plese subtilly  
 To ȝeue him and lene him of his owne good  
 And haue a þank a cote and eek an hood 612  
 In ȝouþe he lerned hadde a good mester  
 he was a wel good wright a carpenter  
 This Reeue sat vpon a wel good stot  
 That was a pomely gray and highte Scot 616  
 A long surcote of blew vppon he hadde  
 And by his side he bar a Rusty bladde  
 Of Northfolk was þis Reeue of which I telle  
 Byside a toun men callen Baldeswelle 620  
 Tukkud he was as is a frere aboute  
 And euer he rood the hynderest of þe route  
 A Sompnour was þer with vs in þat place  
 That hadde a fyr-reed Cherubyns face 624  
 For sawceflem he was with eyzen narwe  
 As hoot he was and leccherous as a sparwe  
 Wip skalled browes blak and piled berd  
 Of his visage children weren aferd 628  
 Ther nas quyke siluer litarge ne bremston  
 Boras Ceruce ne oille of Tartre noon  
 Ne oynement þat wolde clense and byte  
 That him might helpen of his welkes white 632  
 Ne of þe knobbes sittynge on his cheekes  
 wel loued he garleek oynouns and eke leekes  
 And for to drinke strong wyn reed as blood  
 Thanne wolde he speke and crye as he were wood 636  
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde þe wyn

Than wolde he speke no word but latyn  
 A fewe termes hadde he tuo or þre  
 That he hadde lerned out of som decree 640  
 No wondur is he herde it al þe day  
 And eek þe knowe wel how þat a lay  
 Can clepe watte as wel as can þe pope  
 But who-so wolde in oþur þing him grope 644  
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie  
 Ay questio quid Iuris wolde he crye  
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde [leaf 2, back]  
 A better felaw schulde men nowher fynde 648  
 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn  
 A good felawe han his concubyn  
 A .xij. moneth. and excuse him atte fulle  
 And pryuely a Fynch eek cowde he pulle 652  
 And if he fond owher a good felawe  
 he wolde teche him for to haue non awe  
 In such a caas of þe archedeknes curs  
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs 656  
 For in his purs he scholde punyssched be  
 Purs is the Ercedeknes helie quod he  
 But wel I woot he lyeth right in dede  
 Of cursyng oweth ech gulty man to drede 660  
 For curs wol slee. right as assoillyng saueth  
 And also ware him of a Significait  
 In daunger he hadde at his owne assise  
 The þonge gurles of the Diccise 664  
 And knew here counseil and was al here rod  
 A garland had he set vpon his heed  
 As gret as it were for an ale stake  
 A bokeler had he maad him of a cake 668  
**W**ith him þer rood a gentil Pardoner  
 Of Rounciual his frend and his comper  
 That streyt was comen from þe court of Rome  
 Ful lowde he sang com hider loue tome 672  
 The sompnour bar to him a stif burdoun

was neuere trompe of half so gret a soun  
 This pardoner hadde heer as ȝelwe as wex  
 But smothe it heng. as doth a strike of Flex 676  
 By vnces hynges his lokkes þat he hadde  
 And þerwith he his schuldres ouerspradde  
 Ful thenne it lay by culpons on and oon  
 And hood for Iolitee ne wered he noon 680  
 For it was trussud vp in his walet  
 Him þought he rood al of þe newe get  
 Discheuele sauf his cappe he rood al bare  
 Suche glaryng eyzen hadde he as an hare 684  
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe [leaf 10]  
 His walet lay byforn him in his lappe  
 Bret ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot  
 A voys he hadde as smal as eny goot 688  
 No berd ne hadde he ne neuer scholde haue  
 As smothe it was as it ware late I-schaue /  
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare  
 But of his craft fro Berwyk vnto ware 692  
 Ne was þer such another pardoner  
 For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer  
 which þat he saide was oure lady veyl  
 he seide he hadde a gobet of þe seyl 696  
 That seynt Petur hadde whan he wente  
 Vppon þe see til ihū crist him hente  
 he hadde a cros of latoun ful of stones  
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones 700  
 But with þise reliques whanne þat he fand  
 A pore parsoun dwellyng vppon land  
 vpon a day he gat him more moneye  
 Than þat þe parsoun gat in monthes tweye 704  
 And þus with feyned flaterie and Iapes  
 he made þe parsoun and þe poeple his apes  
 But trewely to tellen atte laste  
 He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste 708  
 wel cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye

But altherbest he sang an offertorie  
 For wel<sup>1</sup> he whan þat song was songe [<sup>1</sup> later wyst at side]  
 he moste preche and wel affyle his tunge 712  
 To wynne siluer as he right wel cowde  
 Therefore he sang ful meriely and lowde  
**N**ow haue I told 3ou schortly in a clause  
 Thestat þarray þe nombre and eek þe cause 716  
 why þat assembled was þis companye  
 In Southwerk at þis gentil Ostelrie  
 That highte þe Tabbard faste by þe belle  
 But now is tyme to 3ow for to telle 720  
 how þat we bare vs in þat ilke night  
 whan we were in that Ostelrie alight  
 And aftur wol I telle of oure viage [leaf 10, back]  
 And al þe remenaunt of oure pilgrimage 724  
**B**ut first I pray 3ou of 3our curtesie  
 That 3e ne rette it nat my vilanye  
 Though þat I speke al pleyn in þis matere  
 And telle 3ou here wordes and here cheere 728  
 Ne though I speke here wordes properly  
 For þis 3e knowen also wel as I  
 who-so schal telle a tale aftur a man  
 He moste reherce as neigh as euer he can 732  
 Euery word if it be in his charge  
 Al speke he neuer so Rudely ne large  
 Or elles he moot telle his tale vntrewe  
 Or feyne þing or fynde his wordes newe 736  
 He may not spare þough he were his broþur  
 He moste as wel sey oo word as anopur  
 Crist spak himself ful broode in holy writ  
 And wel 3e woot no vilanye is it 740  
 Eke Plato seith who-so þat can him rede  
 The wordes mot be cosyn to þe dede  
 Also I pray 3ou to for3eue it me  
 Al haue I folk nat set in here degre 744  
 Here in þis tale as þat þei schulde stonde

My witt is thynne. 3e may wel vndurstonde

**G**reet cheere made oure ost vs euerichon

And to þe souper sette he vs anon 748

He serued vs with vitaille atte beste

Strong was þe wyn and wel to drynke vs leste

A semely man oure Ooste was wip alle

For to han been a Marchal in an halle 752

A large man was he with eyzen stepe

A fairere burgeys is þer noon in chepe

Bold of his speche and wys and wel I-taught

And of manhede lakkede he right naught 756

Eke þerto he was right a mery man

And after soper playen he bygan

And spak of myrthe. among opur þinges

whan þat we hadde maad our rekenynges 760

And sayde þus. Lo lordynges trewely

[leaf 11]

3e ben to me right welcome hertily

For by my trouthe if þat I schal not lye

I ne saugh þis 3eer so mery a companye 764

At oones in this herbergh as is now

Fayn wold I do 3ow merthe wiste I how

And of a merthe I am right now bythought

To doon 3ou eese and it schal coste nought 768

3e goon to Caunturbury god 3ou speede

The blisful martir quyte 3ou 3oure meede

And wel I woot/ as 3e gon by þe weye

3e schapen 3ow to talken and to pleye 772

For trewely comfort ne merthe is noon

To Ryde by þe weye domb as a stoon

And þerfore wol I make 3ou disport /

As I seyde erst and do 3ou som confort 776

And if 3ow liketh alle by oon assent

Now for to standen at my Iuggement

And for to werken as I schal 3ou seye

To morwe whan 3e riden by þe weye 780

Now by my fadres soule þat is deed

But 3e be merye smyteþ of myn heed  
 hold vp 3oure hond with-oute more speche  
 Oure counseil was not longe for to seche 784  
 vs þoughte it nas nat' worþ to make it wys  
 And graunted him wipoute more avys  
 And bad him seie his verdite as him leste  
**L** Ordyngeþ quop he now herkenep for þe beste 788  
 But taketh not I pray 3ou in disdayn  
 This is þe poynt to speken schort' and playn  
 That ech of 3ow to schorte with 3oure weie /  
 In þis viage schal telle tales tweye 792  
 To Caunturburiward I mene it so  
 And homward he schal tellen opur tuo  
 Of auentures þat þer han bifalle  
 And which of 3ow þat bereþ him best' of alle 796  
 That is to seye þat telleþ in þis caas  
 Tales of best' sentence and of solas  
 Schal han a soper at 3our alþer cost [leaf 11, back]  
 Here in þis place sittynge by þis post' 800  
 whan þat we comen ageyn from Canturbury  
 And for to make 3ou þe more mery  
 I wol my seluen gladly with 3ou ryde  
 Right' at myn owen cost' and be 3oure gyde 804  
 And who-so wole my Iuggement' withseie  
 Schal paye for al we spenden by þe weye  
 And if 3e vouche sauf' þat it be so  
 Telle me anon wipouten wordes moo 808  
 And I wole erely schappe me þerfore  
 This þing' was graunted and oure othus swore  
 with ful glad herte and prayden him also  
 That he would vouche sauf' for to doon so 812  
 And þat he wolde ben oure gouernour  
 And of our tales Iugge and reportour  
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys  
 And we wolde rewled be at his deuys 816  
 In heygh and lowe. and þus by oon assent

We been acorded to his Iuggement  
 And þer-vpon þe wyn was fet' anoon  
 we dronken and to reste wente echoon. 820  
 wipouten eny lengere taryinge  
 A morwe whan þat' þe day bigan to sprynge  
 vp roos oure Ost' and was oure althur cok'  
 And gaderud vs to-gidur alle in a flok' 824  
 And forth we riden a litel more þan paas  
 vnto þe waterynge of' seint Thomas  
 And þere oure Ost' bigan his hors areste  
 And seyde lordus herkenep if' 3ow leste 828  
 3e woot' 3oure forward and I it 3ou recorde  
 If' euesong' and morwesong' acorde  
 Lat se now who schal telle ferst a tale  
 As euore I moote drinke wyn or ale 832  
 who-so be rebel to my Iuggement  
 Schal paye for al þat' by the weye is spent  
 Now draweth Cut/ er þat' we forther twynne  
 which þat' hath þe schortest schal bygynne 836  
 Sire knight' quop he maister and my lord [leaf 12]  
 Now draweth Cut. for þat is myn acord  
 Cometh ner quod he my lady prioresse  
 And 3e sir Clerk lat' be 3our schamfastnesse 840  
 Ne studieth nat ley hand to euery man  
 Anon to drawen euery wight' bigan  
 And schortly for to tellen as it' was  
 were it by auenture or sort' or cas 844  
 The soth is þis the Cut fil to the knight'  
 Of' which ful glad and blipe was euery wight  
 And telle he moste his tale as was resoun  
 By forward and by composicioun 848  
 As 3e han herd what needep wordes moo  
 And whan þis goode man seigh þat it was so  
 As he that' wys was and obedient'  
 To kepe his forward by his fre assent' 852  
 He seyde syn I schal bygynne the game



GROUP A. § 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE. Harleian 7334. 25

what' welcome be þou cut'. a goddus name  
Now lat vs ryde and herkneþ what I seye  
And with þat' word we riden forþ oure weye 856  
And he bigan with right' a merie chere!  
His tale. and seide right in þis manere.

*[break of one line in the MS.]*

**W**hilom as olde stories tellen vs [on leaf 12]  
 Ther was a Duk' þat highte Theseus 860  
 Of' Athenes he was. lord and gouernour  
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour  
 That' gretter was ther non vnder þe sonne  
 Ful many a Riche Contre hadde he wonne 864  
 That' with his wisdam and his chiualrie  
 He conquered al the regne of' Femynye  
 That' whilom was I-cleped Cithea  
 And weddede the queen Ipolita 868  
 And brought' hire hoom with him in his Contre  
 with moche glorie and gret' solempnite  
 And eek' hire 3onge suster Emelye  
 And þus with victorie and with melodye 872  
 Lete I þis noble duk' to Athenes ryde /  
 And al his Ost' in armes him biside [leaf 12, back]  
 At' certes if it nere to long' to heere  
 I wolde han told 3ow fully þe manere 876  
 How wonnen was the regne of' Femenye  
 By Theseus and by his Chiualrye  
 And of' þe grete bataille for þe nones  
 By-twix athenes. and amazones 880  
 And how asgid was ypolita  
 The faire hardy Quyen of Cithea  
 And of' þe feste that' was at' hire weddyng  
 And of' þe tempest' at hire hoom comyng 884  
 But al þat þing' I most as now forbere  
 I haue god wot' a large feeld to Ere  
 And wayke ben þe Oxen in my plough  
 The remenaunt of' the tale is long' I-nough 888  
 I wol not lette eek'. non of' al þis rowte

lat' euery felawe telle his tale aboute

And lat' see now who schal þe soper wynne 891

And ther I lafte I wolde agayn begynne

[break of one line  
in the MS.]

**T**his Duk' of' whom I make mencion

whan he was comen almost' vnto þe toun

In al his wele and in his moste pryde

he was war as he cast' his eyze aside 896

wher þat' ther kneled in þe hye weye

A companye of' ladies tweye and tweye

Ech after other clad in cloþes blake

But' such a cry and such a woo þey make 900

That in þis world nys creature lyuyng

Ther herde such anoper weymentyng

And of' þat' cry ne wolde þey neuer stenten

Til þey þe Reynes of' his bridel henten 904

what' folk' be 3e þat' at' myn hom comyng

Partourben so my feste with cryenge

Quod Theseus. haue 3e so gret' enuye

Of' myn honour þat' þus compleyne and crie 908

Or who hath 3ow mysboden or offendid

And telleþ me if' it' may ben amendid.

And why þat 3e ben clad þus al in blak' [leaf 13]

The oldest' lady of hem alle spak' 912

whan sche had swowned with a dedly chere

That it was routhe for to seen or heere

And seyde lord to whom fortune hap 3euen

victorie and as a conquerour to luyen 916

Nought' greueth vs 3oure glorie and honour

But we beseken mercy and socour

Haue mercy on oure woo and oure distresse

Som drope of' pitee thurgh 3oure gentillesse 920

Vppon vs wrecchede wommen lat' þou falle

For certus lord. ther nys noon of' vs alle

That' sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene

Now be we Caytifs as it is wel seene 924

Thanked be fortune. and hire false wheel

That noon estat<sup>r</sup> assureth to ben weel  
 And certus lord to abiden ȝoure presence  
<sup>1</sup>Ther in þe temple of þe goddesse Clemence 928  
 we han ben waytynge al þis fourtenight [<sup>1</sup> a later 'here' in margin]  
 Now helpe vs lord syn it is in þy might  
 I wrecche which þat<sup>r</sup> wepe and waylle þus  
 was whilom wyf<sup>r</sup> to kyng<sup>r</sup> Capaneus 932  
 That starf<sup>r</sup> at Thebes. cursed be þat<sup>r</sup> day  
 And alle we þat<sup>r</sup> ben in þis array  
 And maken alle þis lamentacioun  
 we leften alle oure housbondes at þe toun 936  
 whil þat<sup>r</sup> þe sege. þer aboute lay  
 And ȝet þe olde Creon welaway  
 That lord is now of thebes þe citee  
 Fulfilde of Ire and of Iniquite 940  
 He for despyt<sup>r</sup> and for his Tyrannye  
 To do þe deede bodyes vilonye  
 Of alle oure lordes which þat ben I-slawe  
 Hap alle þe bodies on an heap y-drawe 944  
 And wol not<sup>r</sup> suffren hem by noon assent<sup>r</sup>  
 Nother to ben y-buried nor I-brent<sup>r</sup>  
 But<sup>r</sup> makeþ houndes ete hem in despite  
 And with þat<sup>r</sup> word withoute more respite 948  
 They fillen gruf<sup>r</sup> and criden pitously [leaf 13, back]  
 haue on vs wrecched wommen som mercy  
 And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte  
 This gentil duke doun from his courser sterte/ 952  
 with herte pitous whan he herde hem speke  
 him þoughte þat his herte wolde breke  
 whan he seyh hem so pitous and so maat<sup>r</sup>  
 That whilom weren of so gret estat<sup>r</sup> 956  
 And in his armes he hem alle vp hente  
 And hem confortep in ful good entente  
 And swor his oth as he was trewe knight<sup>r</sup>  
 he wolde do so ferforþly his might 960  
 vpon þe tyraunt Creon hem to wreke

That al þe poeple of grece scholde speke  
 how Creon was of Theseus y-serued  
 As he þat hap his deth right wel deserued 964  
 And right anon wipoute eny abood  
 his baner he displayeþ and forþ rood  
 To Thebes-ward. and al his oost bysyde  
 No ner athenes wolde he go ne ryde 968  
 Ne take his eese fully half a day  
 But onward on his way þat nyght he lay  
 And sente anon ypolita þe queene  
 And Emelye hir 3onge suster schene 972  
 vnto the toun of athenes to dwelle  
 And forth he ryt þer is no more to telle  
**T**he reede statue of mars with spere and targe  
 So schyneþ in his white baner large 976  
 That alle þe feeldes gliteren vp and doun  
 And by his baner was born his pynoun  
 Of gold ful riche in which þer was I-bete  
 The Minatour which þat he slough in Crete 980  
 Thus ryt þis Duk þus ryt þis Conquerour  
 And in his oost of Cheualrie þe flour  
 Til þat he cam to Thebes and alighte  
 Faire in a feeld wher as he þoughte to fighte / 984  
 But schortly for to speken of þis þing  
 with Creon which þat was of Thebes kyng  
 He faught and slough him manly as a knight / [leaf 14]  
 In pleyb bataille and putte his folk to flight / 988  
 And by assaut he wan þe Cite aftur  
 And rente doun boþe wal and sparre and raftur  
 And to þe ladies he restored agayn  
 The bones of here housbondes þat were slayn 992  
 To do exequies as was þo þe gyse  
 But it were al to long for to deuyse  
 The grete clamour and þe waymentynge  
 which þat þe ladies made at þe brennyng 996  
 Of þe bodyes and þe grete honour

That Theseus the noble conquerour  
 Doth to þe ladyes whan þey from him wente  
 But schortly for to telle is myn entente 1000  
 whan þat þis worthy Duk þis Theseus  
 hath Creon slayn and Thebes wonne þus  
 Stille in þe feelde he took al night his reste  
 And dide with al þe contre as him leste 1004  
**T**O Ransake in þe cas of bodyes dede  
 hem for to streepe of herneys and of wede /  
 The pilours diden businesse and cure  
 After þe bataile and discomfiture 1008  
 And so byfil þat in þe cas þei founde  
 Thurgh girt with many a greuous bloody wounde  
 Two 3onge knyghte liggyng by and by  
 Boþe in oon armes clad ful richely 1012  
 Of whiche two Arcite hight þat oon  
 And þat oþur knight hight Palamon  
 Nat fully quyke ne fully deed þey were  
 But by here coote armure and by here gere 1016  
 Heraudes knewe hem wel in special  
 As þey þat weren of the blood real  
 Of Thebes and of Sistren tuo I-born  
 Out of þe chaas þe pilours han hem torn 1020  
 And han hem caried softe vnto þe tente /  
 Of Theseus and ful sone he hem sente  
 Tathenes for to dwellen in prisoun  
 Perpetuely he wolde no Raunceoun 1024  
 And þis Duk whan he hadde þus I-doon [leaf 14, back]  
 he took his host and hom he ryt anoon  
 with laurer crowned as a conquerour  
 And þere he lyueþ in Ioye and in honour 1028  
 Terme of his lyf what wolle 3e wordes moo  
 And in a tour in angwische and in woo  
 This Palamon and his felawe arcite  
 For euermo þer may no gold hem quyte 1032  
 This passeþ 3eer by 3eer and day by day

Til it fel oones in a morwe of may  
 That Emelie þat fairer was to seene  
 Than is þe lillie on hire stalkes grene 1036  
 And fresscher þan the may with floures newe  
 For with þe rose colour strof hire hewe  
 I not which was þe fyner of hem two  
 Er it was day as sche was wont to do 1040  
 Sche was arisen and al redy dight  
 For may wole haue no sloggardyng anyght  
 The sesoun prikeþ euery gentil herte  
 And makeþ him out of his sleepe sterte 1044  
 And seith arys and do þin obseruance  
 This maked Emelye han remembrance  
 To do honour to May and for to ryse  
 I-cloped was sche fressh for to deuyse 1048  
 hire þolwe heer was browdid in a tresse  
 Byhynde hire bak aþerde long I gesse  
 And in the gardyn at þe sonne vpriste  
 Sche walkeþ vp and doun wher as hire liste 1052  
 Sche gadereþ floures party whyte and reede  
 To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede  
 And as an aungel heuenly sche song  
 The grete tour þat was so pikke and strong 1056  
 which of þe castel was the cheef dongeoun  
 Ther as þis knightes weren in prisoun  
 Of which I tolde þow and telle schal  
 was euene Ioynnyng to þe gardeyn wal 1060  
 Ther as þis Emely hadde hire pleyynge  
 Bright was þe sonne and cleer þat morwenynge  
 And Palamon þis woful prisoner [leaf 15]  
 As was his wone by leue of his gayler 1064  
 was risen and romed in a Chambre on heigh  
 In which he al þe noble cite seigh  
 And eek þe gardeyn ful of braunches grene  
 Ther as þe fresshe Emelye þe scheene 1068  
 was in hire walk/ and romed vp and doun

This sorweful prisoner þis Palamon  
 Gooth in þe chambre romyng' to and fro  
 And to himself' compleynyng' of' his woo 1072  
 That' he was born / ful ofte he seyð alas  
 And so byfel by auenture or cas  
 That' þurgh a wyndow þikke and many a barre  
 Of Iren greet' and squar as eny sparre 1076  
 he cast' his eyen vpon Emelya  
 And þer with al he bleynte and cryed .A.  
 As þat' he stongen were vnto þe herte  
 And with þat' crye arcite anon vp sterte 1080  
 And seyde cosyn myn what' eyleþ þe  
 That' art' so pale and deedly for to see /  
 why crydestow who hap þe doon offence  
 For goddes loue tak' al in pacience 1084  
 Oure prisoun for it' may non opir be  
 Fortune hap ȝeuen vs þis aduersite  
 Som wikke aspect / or disposicioun  
 Of Saturne by sum constellacioun 1088  
 Hath ȝeuen vs þis alþough we hadde it sworn  
 So stood þe heuen whan þat we were born  
 we moste endure it þis is þe schort' and pleyn  
 This Palamon answered and seyde ageyn 1092  
 Cosyn for sothe of' þis opynyoun  
 Thou hast' a veyn ymaginacioun  
 This prisoun caused me not' for to crye  
 But' I was hurt' right now þurgh myn yhe 1096  
 Into myn herte þat' wol my bane be  
 The fairnesse of' þe lady þat' I see  
 ȝonde in þe gardyn rome to and fro  
 Is cause of' my cryyng' and my wo 1100  
 I not' wheþur sche be womman or goddesse / [leaf 15, back]  
 But' Venus is it/ sothly as I gesse  
 And þer with al on knees a doun he fil  
 And seyde venus if' it' be ȝoure wil 1104  
 ȝow in þis gardyn þus to transfigure



Biforn me sorwful wrecched creature  
 Out of þis prisoun help þat we may scape  
 And if so be oure destyne be schape 1108  
 By eterne word to deyen in prisoun  
 Of oure lynage haueth sum compassioun  
 That is so lowe y-brought by Tyrannye  
 And with þat word Arcite gan espye 1112  
 wher as this lady romed to and fro  
 And with þat sight/ hire beaute hurt him so  
 That if þat Palamon was wounded sore  
 Arcite is hurt as moche as he or more 1116  
 And with a sigh. he seyde pitously  
 The freissche beaute sleeth me sodeynly  
 Of hir that rometh 3onder in þe place  
 And but I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120  
 That I may see hir atte leste weye  
 I nam but deed / ther nys no more to seye  
 This Palamon whan he tho wordes herde  
 Dispitously he loked and answerde 1124  
 whether seistow in earnest or in pley  
 Nay quop Arcite in earnest in good fey  
 God helpe me so me lust ful euele pleye  
 This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye 1128  
 Hit nere quod he to the no gret honour  
 For to be fals ne for to be traytour  
 To me that am thy cosyn and thy broþer  
 I-swore ful deepe and ech of vs to oper 1132  
 That neuer for to deyen in þe payne  
 Til þat deeth departe schal vs twayne  
 Neyþer of vs in lande to hynder other  
 Ne in non other cas / my leue broþer 1136  
 But þou schuldest trewly forþer me  
 In euery caas and I schal forþer þe /  
 This was þyn othe / and myn eek certayn [leaf 16]  
 I wot right wel þou darst/ it nat wiþsain 1140  
 Thus art þou of my counseil out of doute

And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute  
 To loue my lady whom I loue and serue  
 And euere schal vnto myn herte sterue 1144  
 Now certes fals arcite þou schal not so  
 I loued hir first / and tolde the my woo  
 As to my counseil / and to broþer sworn  
 To forthere me as I haue told biforn 1148  
 For which thou art I-bounden as a knight  
 To helpe me / if it lay in þi might /  
 Or elles art þou fals I dar wel sayn  
 This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn 1152  
 Thou schalt quop he be rather fals þan I  
 But þou art fals / I telle þe vttrily  
 For paramour I loued hir first þen þow  
 what wolt þou sayn thou wost it not ȝit now 1156  
 wheþer sche be a womman or goddesse  
 Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse  
 And myn is loue as of a creature  
 For which I tolde þe myn aduenture 1160  
 As to my cosyn / and my broþer sworn  
 I pose þat þou louedest hire biforn  
 wost þou nat wel the olde clerkes saw  
 That who schal ȝeue a louer eny lawe 1164  
 loue is a grettere lawe by my pan  
 Then may be ȝeue / to eny erþly man  
 Therefore posityf lawe and such decre  
 Is broke alway for love in ech degree 1168  
 A man moot needes loue maugre his heed  
 he may nought fle it þough he schulde be deed  
 Al be sche mayde or be sche widewe or wyf  
 And þat is nat likly al þy lyf 1172  
 To stonden in hire grace no more schal I  
 For wel þou wost þy seluen verrily  
 That þou and I been dampned to prisoun  
 Perpetuelly vs gayneth no Raunsoun 1176  
 We stryue as doth the houndes for the boon [leaf 16, back]

They foughte alday and ȝif here part was noon  
 Ther com a kyte whil þat þey were wrope  
 That bar away the boon bitwixe hem bope 1180  
 And þerfore at the kynges court my broþer  
 Eche man for himself þer is non other  
 Loue if the list for I loue and ay schal  
 And sothly leue brother þis is al 1184  
 Eke in þis prisoun moote we endure  
 And euery of vs take his auenture  
 Gret was the stryf and long bytwixe hem tweye  
 ȝif þat I hadde leysir for to seye 1188  
 But to the effect it happed on a day  
 To telle it ȝow as schortly as I may  
 A worpy Duk þat highte Perotheus  
 That felaw was to þe duk Theseus 1192  
 Syn þilke day þat þey were children lyte  
 Was come to Athenes his felawe to visite  
 And for to pley as he was wont to do  
 For in þis world he loued noman so 1196  
 And he loued him as tendurly agayn  
 So wel þey loued as olde bookes sayn  
 That whan oon / was deed soþly to telle  
 his felawe wente and sought him down in helle 1200  
 But of þat story lyst me nought to write  
 Duk Perotheus loued wel Arcite/  
 And hadde him knowe at Thebes ȝeer by ȝeer  
 And fynally at requeste and prayer 1204  
 Of Perotheus withoute any raunsoun  
 Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun  
 Frely to go wher him lust ouer al  
 In such a gyse as I ȝou telle schal 1208  
 This was the forward playnly to endite  
 Bitwixe Theseus and him Arcite  
 That if so were þat Arcite were founde  
 Euere in his lyf by daye night or stounde 1212  
 In eny contre of þis Theseus

And he were caught it was acorded thus  
 That with a swerd he scholde lese his heed [leaf 17]  
 Ther nas noon oþer remedy ne reed 1216  
 But took his leue and homward he him spedde  
 Lete him be war his nekke lip to wedde  
**H**ow gret a sorwe suffreþ now Arcite  
 The dep he feleþ þorugh his herte smyte 1220  
 He weepeth weyleth cryeth pitously  
 To slen himself he wayteþ pryuyly  
 he seyde alas þe day þat I was born  
 Now is my prisoun werse þan was biforn 1224  
 Now is me schape eternally to dwelle  
 Nought in purgatorie but in helle  
 Allas þat euer knewe I Perotheus  
 For elles had I dweld with Theseus 1228  
 I-fetered in his prisoun for euere moo  
 Than had I ben in blis and nat in woo  
 Oonly þe sight of hir whom þat I serue  
 þough þat I hir grace may nat deserue 1232  
 wold han sufficed right ynough for me  
 O dere Cosyn Palamon quod he  
 þyn is þe victoire of þis auenture  
 Ful blisfully in prisoun to endure 1236  
 In prisoun nay certes but in paradys  
 wel hath fortune y-torned þe dys  
 That hap þe sight of hir and I the absence  
 For possible is / syn þou hast hir presence 1240  
 And art a knight a worþi and an able  
 But by som cas syn fortune is chaungable  
 Thou maist to þy desir somtyme atteyne  
 But I that am exiled and bareyne 1244  
 Of alle grace / and in so gret despcir  
 That þer nys water erthe fyr ne eyr  
 Ne creature that of hem maked is  
 That may me helpe ne comfort in þis 1248  
 wel ought I sterue in wanhope and distresse

Far wel my lyf and al my Iolynesse

**A**llas why playnen folk so in comune  
Of purueance of god or of fortune 1252

That zeueth him ful ofte in many a gyse [leaf 17, back]  
wel better þan þei can hemself deuyse

**S**om man desireþ for to haue richesse  
That cause is of his morthre/ or gret seeknesse 1256

And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn

That in his hous is of his mayne slayn

Infinite harmes ben in þis mateere

we wote neuere what þing we preyen heere 1260

we faren as he þat dronke is as a mows

A dronke man wot wel he hap an hous

But he not nat which þe righte wey is þider

And to a dronke man þe wey is slider 1264

And certes in þis world so faren we

we seeken faste after felicite

But we gon wrong ful ofte trewely

Thus may we seyen alle and namely I 1268

That wende haue had a gret opinioun

That ȝif I mighte skape fro prisoun

Than had I be in ioie and parfyt hele

Ther now I am exiled fro my wele / 1272

Syn þat I may not se ȝow Emelye

I nam but deed ther nys no remedye

**V**ppon þat oper syde Palomon

whan he wiste þat arcite was agoon 1276

Such sorwe makeþ þat þe grete tour

Resowneth of his grete ȝollyng and clamour

The pure feteres of his schynes grete

weren of his bitter salte teres wete 1280

Allas quod he arcita cosyn myn

Of al oure strif god woot þe fruyt is þin

Thow walkest now in Thebes at þi large/

And of my woo þou zeuest litel charge/ 1284

Thou maiste seen þou hast wysdom and manhede

Assemble al þe folk' of' oure kynrede  
 And make a werre so scharpe in þis Cite  
 That' by som auenture or by som trete 1288  
 þou mayst/ hire wyne to lady and to wyf'  
 For whom þat' I most' nedes leese my lyf'  
 For as by wey of' possibilite [leaf 18]  
 Syn þou art at' þi large of' prisoun free 1292  
 And art' a lord gret is þin auantage  
 More þan is myn þat' sterue here in a kage  
 For I moot weepe and weyle whil I lyue  
 with al þe woo þat prisoun may me 3yue 1296  
 And eek' with peyne þat' loue me 3eueþ also  
 And doubleþ al my peyne and al my wo  
 Ther with þe fuyr of' Ielousye vpsterte  
 wipinne his brest' and hent him by þe herte 1300  
 So wodly / þat' lik' was he to by-holde  
 The box tree or þe asschen deed and colde  
 Tho seyde he O goddes cruel þat gouerne  
 This world' with byndyng' & wiþ word eterne 1304  
 And writen in þe table of' Athamaunte  
 3oure parlement and 3oure eterne graunte  
 what is mankynde more to 3ow holde  
 Than is a scheep þat roukep in þe folde 1308  
 For slayn is man right' as anoper beste  
 And dwelleþ eek' in prisoun and arreste  
 And hap seknesse and greet' aduersite  
 And ofte tymes gilteles parde 1312  
 what gouernaunce is in 3oure prescience  
 That' gilteles tormentep Innocence  
 And 3et encrecep this al my penaunce  
 That man is bounden to his obseruaunce 1316  
 For goddes sake to letten of his wille  
 Ther as a beste may al his lust' fulfille  
 And whan a beste is deed he ne hap no peyne  
 But' man after his deth moot' wepe and pleyne 1320  
 þough in þis world he haue care and woo

wipouten doute it may stonde so  
 The answer of þis I lete to diuinis  
 But wel I woot þat in þis world gret pyne is 1324  
 Allas I se a serpent or a þeeff  
 That many a trewe man hap doon mescheef  
 Gon at his large and wher him lust/ may turne  
 But I moste be in prisoun þurgh saturne 1328  
 And eek þorugh Iuno Ialous and eke wood [leaf 18, back]  
 That hap destroyed wel neyh al þe blood  
 Of Thebes wip his waste walles wyde /  
 And venus sleep me on þat oper syde / 1332  
 For Ielousye and fere of him Arcyte  
**N**ow wol I stynte of Palamon a lite  
 And lete him stille in his prisoun dwelle  
 And of arcita for þan wol I telle 1336  
 The somer passeþ and þe nightes longe  
 Encrescen double wise the peynes stronge  
 Bothe of þe lover and þe prisoner  
 I noot which hath þe wofullere cheer 1340  
 For schortly for to sey þis Palomon  
 Perpetuely is dampned in prisoun  
 In cheynes and in feteres to be deed  
 And Arcite is exiled vpon his heed 1344  
 For eueremo as out of þat contre  
 Ne neuere mo schal he his lady see  
 Now louyeres / axe I þis question  
 who hap þe worse Arcite or Palomon. 1348  
 That on may se his lady day by day  
 But in prisoun he moot dwelle alway  
 That oper may wher him lust ryde or go  
 But seen his lady schal he neuer mo 1352  
 Now deemeth as 3ou luste 3e þat can  
 For I wol telle forþ as I bigan

**W**han þat arcite to Thebes come was  
 Ful ofte a day he swelde and seyde alas 1356  
 For seen his lady schal he neuer mo  
 And schortly to concluden al his wo  
 So moche sorwe had neuer creature  
 That is or schal whil þat þe world wol dure 1360  
 his sleep his mete his drynk<sup>t</sup> is him by-raft<sup>t</sup>  
 That lene he wexe / and drye as eny schaft/  
 his eyen holwe / grisly to biholde  
 his hewe falwe and pale as asschen colde 1364  
 And solitary he was and euer alone  
 And dwellyng<sup>t</sup> al þe night<sup>t</sup> making his moone  
 And if he herde song<sup>t</sup> or Instrument/ [leaf 19]  
 Then wolde he wepe he mighte nought<sup>t</sup> be stent 1368  
 So feble were his spirites and so lowe  
 And chaunged so þat no man couþe knowe  
 his speche noþer his vois þough men it herde  
 And in his gir for al þe world he ferde 1372  
 Nought<sup>t</sup> oonly lyke þe louers maladye  
 Of hercos but raper lik<sup>t</sup> manye  
 Engendrud of<sup>t</sup> humour malencolyk<sup>t</sup>  
 Byforne in his selle fantasyk<sup>t</sup> 1376  
 And schortly turned was al vp so doun  
 Bothe abytt<sup>t</sup> and eek<sup>t</sup> disposicioun  
 Of him þis woful louere daun arcite  
 what<sup>t</sup> schulde I alway of<sup>t</sup> his wo endite 1380  
 whan he endured hadde a 3eer or tuoo  
 In þis cruel torment peyne and woo  
 At Thebes in his contre as I seyde  
 vpon a night<sup>t</sup> in sleep as he him leyde 1384  
 him þought<sup>t</sup> þat how þe venged god mercurie /  
 Byforn him stood and bad him to be murye  
 his slepy 3erd in hond he bar vp right<sup>t</sup>  
 An hat<sup>t</sup> he wered vpon his heres bright / 1388



Arrayed was þis god as he took/ keepe  
 As he was whan þat Argous took' his sleep  
 And seyde to athenes schalt' þou wende  
 Ther is þe schapen of' þy wo an ende 1392  
 And with þat word arcite wook' and sterte  
 Now trewely how sore þat me smerte  
 Quod he to athenes riȝt' now wol I fare  
 Ne for þe drede of' deth schal I not spare 1396  
 To see my lady þat I loue and serue  
 In hire presence I recche nat to sterue /  
 And with þat word he caught' a gret myrour  
 And saugh þat chaunged was al his colour 1400  
 And saugh his visage was in anoþer kynge  
 And riȝt' anon it ran him into mynde  
 That seppen his face was so disfigured  
 Of' maladie the which he haȝ endured 1404  
 he mighte wel if' þat he bar him lowe [leaf 19, back]  
 lyue in athenes eueremore vnknowe  
 And see his lady wel neih day by day  
 And riȝt' anon he chaunged his aray 1408  
 And cloped him as a pore laborer  
 And al alone saue oonly a squyer  
 That knew his pryuyte and al his cas  
 which was disgysed pourely as he was 1412  
 To athenes is he go þe nexte way  
 And to þe court / he went vpon a day  
 And at' þe ȝate he profred his seruyse  
 To drugge and drawe what so men wolde deuyse 1416  
 And schortly on þis matier for to seyn  
 he fel in office with a Chambirleyn  
 The which that' dwellyng' was with Emelye  
 For he was wys and couthe sone aspye 1420  
 Of' euery seruaunt which þat serued here  
 wel couþe he hewe woode and water bere /  
 For he was ȝonge and mighty for þe nones  
 And þerto he was long' and bygge of' bones 1424

To doon þat eny wight' can him deuyse  
 A ȝeer or two he was in þis seruise  
 Page of þe chambre of Emelye þe bright'  
 And Philostrate he seide þat' he hight' 1428  
 But' half' so wel byloued a man as he  
 Ne was þer neuer in court' of his degree  
 he was so gentil of his condicioun  
 That' þoruh out' al þe court' was his renoun 1432  
 They seyde þat' it' were a charite  
 That Theseus would enhaunsen his degree  
 And putten him in worschipful seruyse  
 Ther as he might' his vertu excersise 1436  
 And þus wiþinne a while his name spronge  
 Boþe of his dedes and of goode tonge  
 That Theseus hap taken him so neer  
 That of his Chambre he made him squyer 1440  
 And ȝaf him gold to mayntene his degree  
 And eek' men brought him out' of his countre  
 From ȝeer to ȝer ful pryuyly his rente [leaf 20]  
 But honestly and sleighly he it spente 1444  
 That no man wondred how þat' he it hadde  
 And þre ȝeer in þis wise his lyf he ladde  
 And bar him so in pees and eek' in werre  
 Ther nas no man þat' Theseus hap so derre 1448  
 And in þis blisse lete I now Arcite  
 And speke I wole of Palomon alyte  
**I**N derknes and horrible and strong' prisoun  
 This seven ȝeer hap seten Palomoun 1452  
 Forpyned what' for woo and for destresse  
 Who felep double sorwe and heuynesse  
 But' Palamon þat loue destreyneþ so  
 That' wood out' of his witt he goþ for wo 1456  
 And eek' þerto he is a prisoner  
 Perpetuelly nat' oonly for a ȝeer  
 Who coupe ryme in englisch propurly  
 His martirdam for-soþe it' am nat .I. 1460

Therefore I passe as lightly as I may  
 hit fel þat in þe seuenþe 3eer in May  
 The þridde night as olde bookes seyn  
 That al þis storie tellen more pleyne 1464  
 were it by auenture or destene  
 As whan a þing is schapen it schal be  
 That soone aftur þe mydnyght Palamoun  
 By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun 1468  
 And fleeth þe cite fast as he may goo  
 For he had 3iue drinke his gayler soo  
 Of a clarre maad of certeyn wyn  
 with nercotykes and opye of Thebes fyn 1472  
 That al þat night þough þat men wolde him schake  
 The gayler sleep he mighte nouzt/ awake  
 And þus he fleep as fast as euer he may  
 The night was schort and faste by þe day 1476  
 That needes cost he moste himseluen hyde  
 And til a groue ther faste besyde  
 with dredful foot þan stalkep Palomoun  
 For schortly þis / was his opynyoun 1480  
 That in þat groue he wolde him hyde al day [leaf 20, back]  
 And in þe night þen wolde he take his way  
 To Thebesward his frendes for to preye  
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye / 1484  
 And shortelich or he wolde lese his lyf  
 Or wynnen Emelye vnto his wyf  
 This is peffect of his entente playn.  
 Now wol I torne vnto Arcite agayn. 1488  
 That litel wiste how nyh þat was his care  
 Til þat fortune hap brought him in the snare  
**T**he busy larke messenger of May  
 Salueþ in hire song þe morwe gray 1492  
 And fyry Phebus rysep vp so bright  
 That þe orient laugheþ of þe light  
 And wip his stremes dryep in þe greues  
 The siluer dropes hongyng in þe leues 1496

And arcite þat is in þe court ryal  
 With Theseus his Squyer principal  
 Is risen and loketh on þe mery day  
 And for to doon his obseruance to May 1500  
 Remembryng of þe poynt of his desire  
 he on his courser stertyng as þe fire  
 Is riden in to feeldes him to pleye  
 Out of þe court were it a myle or tweye 1504  
 And to þe groue of which þat I ȝow tolde  
 By auenture his wey he gan to holde  
 To make him a garland of þe greues  
 were it of woodewynde or hawþorn leues 1508  
 And lowde he song azens þe sonne scheene  
 May wiþ al þyn floures and þy greene  
 welcome be þou wel faire freissche may  
 In hope þat I som grene gete may 1512  
 And fro his courser wiþ a lusty herte  
 Into þe groue ful lustily he sterte  
 And in a pathe he romed vp and down  
 Ther by auenture þis Palamoun 1516  
 was in a busche þat no man might him see  
 Ful sore afered of his dep was he  
 No þing ne knew he þat it was Arcite [leaf 21]  
 God wot he wolde haue trowed it ful lite 1520  
 But soþ is seyde goon ful many ȝeres  
 That feld haþ eyen and þe woode haþ eeres  
 It is ful fair a man to bere him euene  
 For al day men meten atte vnset steuene 1524  
 Ful litel woot arcite of his felawe  
 That was so neih to herken of his sawe  
 For in þe busche he stynted now ful stille  
 whan þat arcyte had romed al his fille / 1528  
 And songen al þe Roundel lustily  
 In to a studie he fel sodeynly  
 As doþ þe louers in here queynte gecres  
 Now in þe crophe / now down in þe breres 1532

Now vp now doun as boket in a welle  
 Right' as þe friday soply for to telle /  
 Now it schyneth now it' reyneþ faste  
 Right' so gan gery venus ouercaste 1536  
 The hertes of hire folk' right' as hir day  
 Is grisful right' so chaungeþ hire aray  
 Selde is þe fryday al þe wyke I-like  
 whan þat' arcite hadde songe he gan to sike 1540  
 And sette him doun wipouten eny more  
 Alas quod he þat' day þat' I was bore  
 how longe Iuno thurgh þy cruelte  
 wiltow werreyen Thebes þe Citee 1544  
 Allas I-brought' is to confusioun  
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun  
 Of Cadynus / þe which was þe furst' man  
 That' Thebes bulde or first' þe toun bygan 1548  
 And of þat Cite first' was crowned kyng'  
 Of his lynage / am I and his ofspring'  
 By verray line and of his stok' ryal  
 And now I am so caytyf' and so þral 1552  
 That' he þat' is my mortal enemy  
 I serue him as his squyer pourely  
 And ȝet' doth Iuno me wel more schame  
 For I dar nought' byknowe myn owne name 1556  
 But' þer as I was wont' to hote arcite [leaf 21, back]  
 Now hote I Philostrate nouȝt' worth a myte  
 Allas þou felle mars allas Iuno  
 Thus haþ ȝoure Ire owre lynage fordo 1560  
 Saue oonly me and wrecchid Palomoun  
 That' Thescus martyreþ in prisoun  
 And ouer al this to slee me vtterly  
 Loue haþ his fyry dart' so brennyngly 1564  
 I stykid þorugh my trewe careful herte  
 That' schapen was my deth erst' þan my scherte  
 ȝe slen me with ȝoure eyhen Emelye  
 ȝe ben þe cause wherfore þat I dye 1568

Of al þe remenant of al myn oþer care  
 Ne sette I nouȝt þe mountaunce of a tare  
 So þat I couþe do ouȝt to ȝoure pleasaunce  
 And with þat word he fel doun in a traunce 1572  
 A longe tyme and aftirward vpsterte  
 This Palamon þat þouȝte þurgh his herte  
 he felt a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde  
 For Ire he quook/ he nolde no lenger abyde 1576  
 And whan þat he haþ herd arcites tale  
 As he were wood wip face deed and pale  
 he sterte him vp out of þe bussches þikke  
 And seyð arcyte / false traitour wikke/ 1580  
 Now art þou hent/ þat louest my lady so.  
 For whom þat I haue al þis peyne and wo.  
 And art my blood and to my counseil sworn  
 And I ful ofte haue told þe heere byforn 1584  
 And hast by-laped here þe duke Theseus  
 And falsly chaunged hast þy name þus  
 I wol be deed or elles þou schalt dye  
 þou schalt not loue my lady Emelye 1588  
 But I wil loue hire oonly and nomo  
 For I am Palomon þy mortal fo  
 And þough þat I no wepen haue in þis place  
 But out of prisoun am y-stert by grace 1592  
 I drede not þat oþer þou schalt dye  
 Or þou ne schalt not loue Emelye  
 Chese which þou wilt for þou schalt not asterte [leaf 22]  
 This arcite with ful despitous herte 1596  
 whan he him knew and had his tale herde  
 As fers as a lyoun pullep out a swerde  
 And seide þus by god þat sitteþ aboue  
 Nere it þat þou art sike and wood for loue 1600  
 And eek þat þou no wepne has in þis place  
 But out of prisoun art y-stert by grace  
 That þou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond  
 For I defye þe scurte and þe bond 1604

which þat þou seyst I haue maad to þe  
 For verray fool / þenk þat loue is fre  
 And I wol loue hire mawgre al þy might  
 But for þou art a gentil parfizt knight 1608  
 And wenest to dereyne hire by batayle  
 haue heere my troupe to morwe I nyl not fayle  
 wipouten wityng of eny oþer wight  
 That heer I wol be founden as a knight 1612  
 And bryngen harneys right I-nough for þe  
 And ches þe best and lef þe worst for me  
 And mete and drynke / þis night wil I bryng  
 Inough for þe and cloþ for þy beddyng 1616  
 And if so be þat þou my lady wyne  
 And sle me in þis wood þat / I am Inne  
 Thou maist wel haue þy lady as for me  
 This Palomon answerþ I graunt it þe 1620  
 And þus þey ben departed til a morwe  
 whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe  
 O Cupide / out of al charite  
 O regne þat wolt no felaw haue with þe 1624  
 Ful soþ is seyde / þat loue ne lordschipe  
 wol not his þonkes haue no felaschipe  
 wel fynden þat arcite and Palamoun  
 Arcite is riden anon to þe toun 1628  
 And on þe morwe or it were day light  
 Ful priuely two harneys hap he dight  
 Boþe sufficaunt and mete to darreyne  
 The batayl in þe feeld betwix hem tweyne 1632  
 And on his hors alone as he was born [leaf 22, back]  
 he caryed al þis harneys him byforn  
 And in þe groue at tyme and place I-sette  
 This arcite and þis Palamon ben mette 1636  
 Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face  
 Right as þe honterus in þe regne of Trace  
 That stondeþ in þe gappe with a spere  
 whan honted is þe lyoun. or þe bere 1640

And hereþ him / comyng' in þe greues  
 And brekeþ boþe þe bowes and þe leues  
 And þenkeþ here comeþ my mortel enemy  
 wiþoute faile he mot be deed or I 1644  
 For eyþer I mot' slen him at þe gappe  
 Or he moot slee me if' it' me myshappe  
 So ferden þey in chaungyng' of' here hew  
**A**S fer as eyþer of' hem oþer knew 1648  
 Ther nas no good day ne no saluyng'  
 But' streyt' wiþouten wordes rehersyng'  
 Euery of' hem helpeþ to armen oþer  
 As frendly as he were his owen broþer 1652  
 And þanne wiþ / here scharpe speres stronge  
 They foyneden ech at oþer longe  
 Tho it semed þat' þis Palomon  
 In his fightyng' were a wood lyoun 1656  
 And as a cruel tygre was arcite  
 And as wilde boores gonne þey smyte  
 That' froþen white as fome froþe wood  
 vp to þe ancle þey faught' in here blood 1660  
 And in þis wise I lete hem fiztyng' welle  
 And forþere I wol of' Theseus telle  
**T**he destyne mynistre general  
 That' excused in þe world ouer al 1664  
 The purueans þat' god haþ seye byforn  
 So strong' it is þat þey þe world had sworn  
 The contrary of' a þing' by ȝe or nay  
 ȝet som tyme it schal falle vpon a day 1668  
 That' falleþ nought' eft' in a þousend ȝeere  
 For certeynly oure appetites heere  
 Be it of' pees oþer hate or loue [leaf 23]  
 Al is it reuled by þe sight' aboue 1672  
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus  
 That' for to honte is so desirous  
 And namely þe grete hert' in May  
 That' in his bed þer daweth him no day 1676



That he nys clad and redy for to ryde  
 with hont/ and horn and houndes him byside  
 For in his hontyng' hap he such delyt  
 That' is his ioye and his appetyt 1680  
 To been him self' þe grete hertes bane  
 For after may he serueþ now Dyane  
 Cleer was þe day as I haue told or þis  
 And Theseus with alle Ioye and blys 1684  
 with his ypolita þe fayre queene  
 And Emelye cloped al in greene  
 On hontyng' be þay riden ryally  
 And to þe groue þat' stood þer faste by 1688  
 In which þer was an hert' as men him tolde  
 Duk' Theseus þe streyte wey hap holde  
 And to þe launde he rydeþ him ful right'  
 There was þe hert' y-wont' to haue his flight 1692  
 And ouer a brook' and so forþ in his weye  
 This duk' wol haue of' him a cours or tweye  
 wiþ houndes which as him lust' to comaunde  
 And whan þis Duk' was come in to þe launde 1696  
 vnder þe sonne he lokep right' anon  
 he was war of arcite and Palomon  
 That' foughten breeme as it were boores tuo  
 The brighte swerdes wente to and fro 1700  
 So hidously þat with þe leste strook'  
 It' seemeþ as it wolde felle an Ook  
 But' what' þey were noþing' 3it' he woot  
 This duk' wiþ spores / his courser he smoot 1704  
 And at' a stert' he was bitwix hem tuoo  
 And pullid out a sword and cride hoo  
 Nomore vp payne / of' leesyng' of' 3our heed  
 By mighty mars anon he schal be deed 1708  
 That' smyteþ eny strook' þat' I may seen [leaf 23, back]  
 But' telleþ me what' mestir men 3e been  
 That' ben so hardy for to fighten heere  
 wiþoute Iugge or oper officere 1712

As it were in a lyste really  
 This Palamon answerde hastily  
 And seyde sire what nedep wordes mo  
 we han þe dep deserued boþe tuo 1716  
 Tuo woful wrecches been we and kaytyues  
 That ben encombred of oure owne lyues  
 And as þou art a rightful lord and Iuge  
 Ne ȝeue vs neyþer mercy ne refuge/ 1720  
 But sle me first for seynte Charite  
 But sle my felaw eek as wel as me  
 Or sle him first for þough þou knowe him lyte  
 This is þy mortal fo þis is arcite 1724  
 þat fro þy lond is banyscht/ on his heed  
 For which he hap I-serued to be deed  
 For þis is he þat come to þi gate  
 And seyde þat / he highte Philostrate 1728  
 Thus hap he Iaped þe many a yer  
 And þou hast maad of him þy cheef squyer  
 And þis is he þat loueth Emelye  
 For siþ þe day is come þat I schal dye 1732  
 I make pleyedly my confessioun  
 þat I am / þe woful Palamoun  
 That hap þi prisoun broke wikkedly  
 I am þy mortal foo and it am I 1736  
 That louep so hote / Emely þe bright  
 That I wol dye present in hire sight  
 Therefore I aske deþ and my Iuwysse  
 But slee my felaw in þe same wyse 1740  
 For boþe we haue serued to be slayn  
**T**his worthy duk answerde anon agayn  
 And seide þis is / a schort conclusioun  
 ȝour owne mouþ by ȝour owne confessioun 1744  
 hap dempned ȝou boþe / and I wil it recorde  
 It needep nouȝt to pyne ȝow wiþ þe corde  
 ȝe schul be deed by mighty mars þe reede [leaf 24]  
 The queen anon for verray wommanhede 1748

Gan for to wepe and so dede Emelye  
 And alle þe ladies in companye  
 Great' pite was it as it' þought' hem alle  
 That euere such a chaunce schulde falle 1752  
 For gentil men þei were and of' gret estate  
 And noþing' but for loue was þis debate  
 And saw here bloody woundes wyde and sore  
 And alle þey cryde lesse and þe more 1756  
 Haue mercy lord vpon vs wommen alle  
 And on here bare knees anoon þey falle  
 And wolde haue kissed his bare feet right as he stood  
 Till atte laste aslaked was his mood 1760  
 For pite rennep sone in gentil herte  
 And þough he for Ire quok' and sterte  
 he hap it al considered in a clause  
 The trespass of' hem boþe and here cause 1764  
 And al-þough his Ire here gylt' accused  
 3et' he in his resoun hem boþe excused  
 And þus he þought' þat' euery maner man  
 wol help himself' in loue if' þat he can 1768  
 And eek' delyuer himself' out of' prisoun  
 And eek' in his hert/ had compassioun  
 Of' wommen for þey wepen euer in oon  
 And in his gentil hert' he þought' anoon 1772  
 And soply he to himself' seyde fy.  
 vpon a lord þat' wol haue no mercy  
 But' be a lyoun boþe in word in dede  
 To hem þat' ben in repentaunce and drede 1776  
 As wel as to a proud dispitious man  
 That' wol maynteyne þat he first bigan  
 That' lord hap litel of' discrecioun  
 That' in such caas can nō diuisioun 1780  
 But' wayteþ pride and humblenesse after oon  
 And schortly whan his Ire is ouer gon  
 He gan to loke on hem with eyen blake and light'  
 And spak' þese same wordes al in hight 1784

The god of loue a benedicite [leaf 24, back]  
 how mighty and how gret a lord is he  
 Agayns his might þer gayneth non obstacle  
 He may be cleped a god of his miracle 1788  
 For he can maken at his owen gyse  
 Of euery herte / as him lust deuyse  
 Lo her is arcite and Palomon  
 That quyte / were out of my prisoun 1792  
 And might haue lyued in Thebes ryally  
 And witen I am here mortal enemy  
 And þat here dep lith in my might also  
 And ȝet hap loue maugre here eyȝen tuo 1796  
 I-brought hem hider bope for to dye  
 Now lokeþ is nat þat an heih folye  
 who may be a fole if þat he loue  
 Byholde for goddes þap sitteþ aboue 1800  
 Se how þey blede be þey nought wel arrayed  
 Thus hap here lord þe god of loue hem payed  
 here wages and here fees for here seruise  
 And ȝet wenen they to ben wise / 1804  
 That seruen loue for ought þat may bifalle  
 But þis is ȝette / þe beste game of alle  
 That sche for whom þey haue þis Ielousye  
 ¶ Can hem þerfore as moche þank as me 1808  
 Sche woot no more of al þis hote fare  
 By god þan wot a Cuckow or an hare  
 But al moot ben assayed hoot or colde  
 A man moot ben a fool oþer ȝong or olde 1812  
 I woot it by my self ful ȝore a-gon  
 For in my tyme a seruant was I on  
 And sythen þat I knewe of lous peyne  
 And wot how sore it can a man destreyne 1816  
 As he þat hap often ben caught in his lace  
 I ȝou forȝeue holly þis trespace  
 At þe request of þe queen þat kneleþ heere  
 And eek of Emely my suster deere 1820

And 3e schullen bope anon vnto me swere  
 That neuer 3e schullen my corowne dere  
 Ne make werre on me night ne day [leaf 25]  
 But be my freendes alle þat 3e may 1824  
 I 3ou for3eue þis trespas euery dele  
 And þey him swore his axyng euery dele  
 And him of lordschip and of mercy prayde  
 And he hem graunted mercy and þus he sayde 1828  
**T**O speke of real lynage and riches  
 Though þat sche were a queen or a prynces  
 Ilk of 3ow bope is worþy douteles  
 To wedde when tyme is but napeles 1832  
 I speke as for my suster Emelye  
 For whom 3e haue þis stryft and Ielousye  
 3e woot 3oure self sche may not wedde two  
 At oones þough 3e faughten euer mo 1836  
 That oon of 3ow or be him loth or leef  
 he may go pypen in an Iuy leef  
 This is to say sche may nought haue bope  
 Al be 3e neuer so Ielous ne so lope 1840  
 Forþy I put 3ou bothe in þis degre  
 That ilk of 3ou schal haue his destyne  
 As him is schape / and herken in what wyse  
 Lo here 3our ende of þat I schal deuyse 1844  
**M**y wil is þis for playn conclusioun  
 wipouten eny repplicacioun  
 If þat 3ou liketh tak it for þe best  
 That euery of 3ou schal go wher him lest 1848  
 Frely wipouten raunsoun or daungeer  
 And þis day fyfty wykes fer ne neer  
 Euerich of 3ou schal bryng an hundred knightes  
 Armed for lystes vp at alle rightes 1852  
 Al redy to derayne hir by batayle  
 And þus byhote I 3ou wipouten fayle  
 vpon my trouthe and as I am a knight  
 That whepir of 3ow bope þat hap might 1856

This is to seyn that' whepir he or þou  
 May wiþ his hundred as I spak' of' now  
 Sle his contrary or out' of' lystes dryue  
 Him schal I zeue Emelye to wyue 1860  
 To whom þat fortune zeueþ so fair a grace [leaf 25, back]  
 The lyste schal I make in þis place  
 And god so wisly on my sowle rewe  
 As I schal euen iuge ben and trewe 1864  
 3e schul non opir ende wiþ me make  
 That' oon of' 3ow schal be deed or take  
 And if' 3ou þinkeþ þis is wel I-sayde  
 Say 3oure avys and holdeþ 3ow a-payde 1868  
 This is 3oure ende and 3oure conclusioun  
 who lokeþ lightly now but' Palamoun  
 who spryngeþ vp for ioye but arcite  
 who coupe telle or who coupe endite 1872  
 The ioye þat is made in þis place  
 whan Theseus haþ don so fair a grace  
 But down on knees wente euery wight  
 And þanked him with al here hertes might 1876  
 And namely þe thebanes ofte siþe  
 And þus wiþ good hope and herte bliþe  
 They taken here leue and hom-ward þey ryde  
 To Thebes / wiþ olde walles wyde 1880

[ . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]

**A** Trow men wolde / it deme necligence  
 If' I forzete to telle þe dispence  
 Of' Theseus þat' goþ so busily  
 To maken vp þe lystes rially 1884  
 & such a noble theatre as it was  
 I dar wel say þat' in þis world þer nas  
 The circuite þer was a myle aboute  
 walled of' stoon and dyched al wiþoute 1888  
 Round was þe schap in maner of' compaas

Ful of degre þe height of sixty paas  
 That whan a man was set in o degre  
 he letted nought his felaw for to se 1892

**E**stward þer stood a gate of marbul whit  
 westward such anoper in opposit/  
 And schortly to conclude such a place  
 was non in erþe in so litel space 1896

In al þe lond þer nas no craftys man  
 That geometry or arsmetrike can  
 Ne purtreyour ne keruer of ymages [leaf 28]  
 That Theseus ne ȝaf hem mete and wages 1900

The theatre for to maken and deuyse  
 And for to don his right and sacrificse  
 he Estward hap vpon þe gate aboue  
 In worschip of venus goddes of loue 1904

Don make an auter and an oratory  
 And westward in þe mynde and in memory  
 Of mars he hap I-maked such an oper  
 That coste largely of gold a foper 1908

And northward in a toret on þe walle  
 Of alabaster whit and reed coralle  
 An oratory riche for to see  
 In worschip of Dyane goddes of chastite 1912

hath Theseus I-wrought in noble wise  
 But ȝit/ had I forgeten to deuyse /  
 The nobil keruyng and þe purtretures  
 The schap þe contynaunce of þe figures 1916

That weren in þe Oratories þre  
**F**urst in þe temple of venus þou may se  
 wrought in þe wal ful pitous to byholde  
 Thre broken slepes and þe sykes colde 1920

The sacred teeres and þe waymentyng  
 The fuyry strokes and þe desiryng  
 That loues servauntz in þis lyf enduren  
 The othes þat by her couenantz assuren 1924  
 Plesance and hope desyr fool-hardynesse

Beaute and zoupe baudery and riches  
 Charmes and sorcery lesynges and flatery  
 Dispense busynes and Ielousy 1928  
 That werud of 300 guldes a gerland  
 And a cukkow sitting on hire hand  
 Festes instrumentz carols and daunces  
 Lust and array and al þe circumstaunces / 1932  
 Of loue which I rekned and reken schal  
 Ech by oþer / were peynted on þe wal  
 And mo þan I / can make of mencioun  
 For sothly al þe mount of Setheroun 1936  
 Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng [leaf 24, back]  
 was schewed on þe wal here portrayng  
 wip alle þe Gardyn and al þe lustynes  
 Nought was forȝete þe porter ydelnes 1940  
 Ne Narcisus þe fayr of ȝore agon  
 Ne ȝet þe foly of kyng Salomon  
 Ne eek þe strengþe / of him hercules  
 Thenchautementz of Medea and Cerces 1944  
 Ne of turnus of which þe hard fuyry corage  
 The riche Cresus caytif in seruage  
 Thus may we see þat wisdom and riches  
 Beaute ne sleight strengþe ne hardynes 1948  
 Ne may wip venus holde champartye  
 For as sche lust þe world þan may sche gye  
 lo al þis folk I-caught were in hire trace  
 Til þay for wo fuloften sayde allas 1952  
 Sufficeþ þis ensample oon or tuo  
 And þough I coupe reken a þousend mo  
 The statu of venus glorious for to see  
 was naked fletyng in þe large see 1956  
 And fro þe nauele doun al couered was  
 with wawes grene as bright as eny glas  
 A citole in hire right hond hadde sche  
 And on hir heed ful semely on to see 1960  
 A rose garland ful swete and wel smellyng



And abouen hire heed dowues fleyng'  
 Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido  
 vpon his schuldres were wynges two 1964  
 And blynd he was as it' is often seene  
 A bowe he bar and arwes fair and greene  
**W**hy schuld I nouȝt' as wel telle ȝou alle 1968  
 The portraiture þat' was vpon þe walle  
 wiþ in þe temple of' mighty mars þe reede  
 Al peynted was þe wal in lengþ and breede  
 loke to þe Estres of' þe grisly place  
 That' hight' þe gret' tempul of' mars in trace 1972  
 In þat' colde and in þat' frosty regioun  
 Ther as mars hap his souereyn mancioun  
 First' on þe wal was peynted a foreste [leaf 27]  
 In which þer dwelled neyther man ne beste / 1976  
 wiþ knotty knarry bareyn trees olde  
 Of' stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde  
 In which þer ran as wymbul in a swough  
 As it' were a storme schuld berst' euery bough 1980  
 And downward on an hil vnder a bent /  
 Ther stood þe tempul of' marcȝ armypotent /  
 wrought' al of' burned steel of' which þentre  
 was long' and streyt' and gastly for to see 1984  
 And þer out/ came a rage of' suche aprise  
 That' it' maad al þe gates for to rise  
 The norþen light' in at' þe dore schon  
 For wyndow on þe walle was þer noon 1988  
 Thorugh þe which men might' no light discerne  
 The dores wer alle. ademauntȝ eterne  
 I-clenched ouer thward and endelong/  
 with Iren tough / and for to make it' strong' 1992  
 Euery piler þe tempul to susteene  
 was tonne greet of' Iren bright and schene  
 Ther saugh I furst' þe derk' ymaginyng'  
 Of' felony and al the compassyng' 1996  
 The cruel Ire as reed as eny gleede



3et<sup>t</sup> was here deth depeynted þer byforn  
 By manasyng<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> marc3 right<sup>t</sup> by figure  
 So was it schewed right<sup>t</sup> in þe purtreture 2036  
 As is depeynted in sterres aboue  
 who schal be slayn or elles deed for loue  
 Sufficeþ oon ensample in stories olde

[*A break of one line in the MS.*]

**T**he statue of<sup>t</sup> mars vpon a carte stood  
 Armed and loked grym as he were wood  
 And ouer his heed þer schyneþ two figures  
 Of<sup>t</sup> sterres þat been cleped in scriptures 2044

That oon puella þat<sup>t</sup> opur Rubius  
 This god of<sup>t</sup> armes was arayed þus  
 A wolf<sup>t</sup> þer stood byforn him at his feet  
 wip<sup>t</sup> eyen reed and of<sup>t</sup> a man he eet 2048

wip<sup>t</sup> sotyl pencil depeynted was þis storie  
 In redoutyng<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> mars and of<sup>t</sup> his glorie  
**N**ow to þe temple of<sup>t</sup> Dyane þe chaste  
 As schortly as I can I wol me haste 2052  
 To telle 3ou al þe descripcioun

Depeynted ben þe walles vp and down  
 Of<sup>t</sup> huntynge and of<sup>t</sup> schamefast<sup>t</sup> chastite  
 Ther saugh I how woful Calystope / 2056  
 whan þat Dyane was agreued with here

[leaf 28]

was turned from a womman to a bere  
 And after was sche maad þe loode-sterre  
 Thus was it peynted I can say no ferre 2060  
 hire son is eek<sup>t</sup> aftir as men may see

Ther saw3 I dyane turned in til a tree  
 I mene nou3t<sup>t</sup> þe goddes Dyane  
 But<sup>t</sup> Peneus dou3ter / þe whiche hight dane 2064

Ther saugh I atheon an hert<sup>t</sup> I-maked  
 For vengeance þat<sup>t</sup> he saugh Dyane al naked  
 I saugh how þat his houndes han him caught<sup>t</sup>  
 And freten him for þat<sup>t</sup> þey knew him naught 2068  
 3it<sup>t</sup> I-peynted was a litel forþer more

how atthalaunce huntyd þe wilde bore  
 And Melyagre / and many anoper mo  
 For which Dyane wrought him care and woo 2072  
 Ther saugh I eek many anoper story  
 The which me list not drawe in to memory  
 This goddess son / an hertful hy he seet  
 with smale houndes at hire feet 2076  
 And vnder-neþe hir feet sche had þe moone  
 wexyng it was and schulde wane soone  
 In gaude greene hire statue cloped was  
 wip bowe in hande and arwes in a cas 2080  
 hir eyzen caste sche ful lowe adoun  
 Ther Pluto hap his derke regioun  
 A womman trauailyng was hire biforn  
 But for hire child so longe was vnborn 2084  
 Ful pitously lucyna gan she calle  
 And seyde help / for þou mayst best of alle /  
 wel couþe he peynte lyfly þat it wrouzt  
 wip many a floren he þe hewes bought 2088  
 Now been þise listes maad and Theseus /  
 That at his grete cost arayed þus  
 The temples and þe Theatres euery del  
 whan it was don it liked him right wel 2092  
 But stynt I wil of Theseus a lite  
 And speke of Palomon and of Arcite  
**T**He day approch of her attournyng [leaf 28, back]  
 That euery schuld an hundred kniztes bryng 2096  
 The batail to derreyne as I 3ou tolde  
 And til athenes her couenant to holde  
 hath euery of hem brought an .C. knightes  
 wel armed for þe werre at alle rightes 2100  
 And sikerly þer trowed many a man  
 That / neuer sippen þat þis world bigan  
 For to speke of knighthod of her hond  
 As fer as god hap maked see or lond 2104  
 Nas of so fewe so good a company

For euery wight' þat' loueþ chyualry  
 And wold his þankes haue a passant name  
 he preyed þat' he might' be of' þat game 2108  
 A wel was him þat' þerto chosen was  
 For if' þer felle to morwe such a caas  
 I knowe wel þat' euery lusty knight/  
 That' loueþ paramours and hath his might' 2112  
 were it in Engelond or elles where /  
 They wold here þankes wilne to be þere  
 To fight for / a lady benedicite  
 It' were a lusty sighte for to see 2116  
 And right' so ferden þey with Palomon  
 wiþ him þer wente knyghtes many oon  
 Some wol ben armed in an haburgoun  
 In a bright brest' plat' and a gypoun 2120  
 And som wold haue a peyre plates large  
 And som wold haue a prys scheld or a targe  
 Som wol been armed on here legges weel  
 And haue an ax and eek' a mace of' steel 2124  
 Ther nys no newe gyse þat' it' nas old  
 Armed were þey as I haue told  
 Euerich after his owen opinioun  
 Ther maistow se comyng' wiþ Palomoun 2128  
**T**ligurge himself' þe grete kyng' of Trace  
 Blak' was his berd and manly was his face  
 The cercles of' / his eyen in his heed  
 They gloweden bytwixe 3olw and reed 2132  
 And lik' a griffoun loked he aboute [leaf 29]  
 with kempe heres on his browes stowte  
 his lymes greet' his bawnes hard and stronge  
 his schuldres brood his armes rounde and longe 2136  
 And as þe gyse was in his contre  
 Ful heye vpon a chare of' gold stood he  
 wiþ foure white boles in a trays  
 In stede of cote armour in his harnays 2140  
 wiþ nayles 3olwe and bright as eny gold

he had a bere skyn cole-blak for old  
 his lange heer y-kempt byhynd his bak  
 As eny rauen fether it schon for blak 2144  
 A wreþe of gold arm-gret and huge of wight/  
 Vpon his heed set ful of stoonēs bright  
 Of fyne rubeus and of fyn dyamauntȝ  
 Aboutē his chare wente with white alauntȝ 2148  
 Twenty and mo as grete as eny stere  
 To hunt at þe lyoun or at þe bere  
 And folwed him with mosel fast I-bounde  
 Colerd of gold and torettȝ fyled rounde 2152  
 An hundred lordes had he in his route  
 Armed ful wel wiþ hertes stern and stoute  
**W**ith arcita in stories as men fynde  
 The gret Emetreus þe kyng of ynde 2156  
 Vppon a steede bay trapped in steel  
 Couered wiþ cloþ and of gold dyapred wel  
 Cam rydyng lyk / þe god of armes mars  
 his coote armour was of a cloþ of Tars 2160  
 Cowched of perlys whyte round and grete  
 his sadil was of brend gold newe bete  
 A mantelet vpon his schuldre hangyng  
 Bret-ful of Rubies reed and fir sparclýng 2164  
 His crispe her lik rynges was I-ronne  
 And þat was ȝalwe and gliteryng as þe sonne  
 his nose was heigh his eyen were cytryne  
 His lippes rounde his colour was sangwyn 2168  
 A fewe freknes in his face y-spreynd  
 Betwixe ȝolwe and somdel blak y-meynd  
 And as a lyoun he his lokyng caste [leaf 29, back]  
 Of fyue and twenty ȝeer his age I caste 2172  
 his berd was wel bygonne for to spryngē  
 His voys was as a trumpe thunderynge  
 vpon his heed he wered a laurer grene  
 A garlond freisch and lusty for to sene 2176  
 vpon his hond he bar for his delyt

An Egle tame as eny lylie whyt  
 An hundred lordes had he with him þer  
 Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger 2180  
 Ful richely in alle maner þinges  
 For trusteþ wel þat dukes Erles kynges  
 were gadred in þis noble companye  
 For loue and for encres of Chinalrye / 2184  
 Aboute þe kyng þer ran on euery part  
 Ful many a tame lyoun and lepart  
 And in þis wise þis lordes alle and some  
 Been on the sonday to þe cite kome 2188  
 Aboute prime and in þe toun alight  
 This Theseus þis duk þis worpy knight  
 whan he had brought hem in to þis cite  
 And ynned hem euerich at his degre 2192  
 he festep hem and dop so gret labour  
 To esen hem and do hem al honour  
 That 3it men wene þat no mannes wyt/  
 Of non estat þat cowde amenden it/ 2196  
 The mynstralcye þe seruyce at þe feste  
 The grete 3iftes to þe most and leste  
 The riche aray of Thebes his paleys  
 Ne who sat first ne last vpon þe deys 2200  
 what ladies fayrest ben or best daunsyng  
 Or which of hem can daunce best or syng  
 Ne who most felyngly spekep of loue  
 what haukes sitten on þe perche aboue 2204  
 what houndes lyen in þe floor a-doun  
 Of al þis make I now no mencioune  
 But of þeffect þat þinkeþ me þe beste /  
 Now comth þe poynt and herkneþ if 3ou leste 2208  
 The sonday night or day bigan to springe [leaf 30]  
 when Palomon þe larke herde synge  
 Al þough it were nought day by houres tuo  
 3it sang þe larke and Palomon also / 2212  
 with holy herte and with an heih corage

He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage  
 Vnto þe blisful Cithera benigne  
 I mene Venus honorable and digne 2216

And in here hour he walkeþ forþ a paas  
 Vnto þe lystes þer hir temple was  
 And doun he kneleþ and wiþ humble cheer  
 And her sore and seide as 3e schal heer 2220

**F**Airest O fairest / O lady myn Venus  
 Doughter of Ioue and spouse to Vlcanus  
 Thou glader of þe mount/ of Citheroun  
 For þilke loue þou haddest to adeoun 2224

haue pite on my bitter teeres smerte  
 And tak' myn humble prayer to þin herte  
 Allas I ne haue no langage for to telle  
 Theffectes ne þe tormentz of myn helle 2228

Myn herte may myn harmes nat bewreye  
 I am so confus þat I may not seye  
 But mercy lady bright þat knowest wel  
 My þoughþ and felest what harm þat I fel 2232

Consider al þis and rew vpon my sore  
 As wisly as I schal for euermore /  
 Enforce my might þi trewe seruant to be  
 And holde werre alday wiþ chastite 2236

That make I myn avow so 3e me helpe  
 I kepe nat of armes for to 3elpe  
 Ne nat I aske to morn to haue victorie  
 Ne renoun in þis caas ne Veyne glorie 2240

Of pris of armes blowyng vp and doun  
 But I wolde haue ful possessioun  
 Of Emelye and dye in þi seruise  
 Fynd þou þe maner how and in what wyse 2244

I recche nat but it may better be  
 To haue victorie of him or he of me  
 So þat I haue my lady in myn armes [leaf 30, back]  
 For þough so be þat mars be god of armes 2248

And 3e be venus þe goddes of loue



3oure vertu is so gret<sup>t</sup> in heuen aboue  
 Thy temple wol I worschipe euermo  
 And on þin auter wher I ryde or go 2252  
 I wol do sacrifice and fyres beete  
 And if<sup>t</sup> 3e wol nat<sup>t</sup> so my lady sweete  
 Than pray I þe to morwe with a spere  
 That<sup>t</sup> arcita me þurgh the herte bere / 2256  
 Thanne rekke I nat<sup>t</sup> whan I haue lost<sup>t</sup> my lyf<sup>t</sup>  
 Though þat<sup>t</sup> arcite haue hir to his wyf<sup>t</sup>  
 This is þeffect/ and ende of<sup>t</sup> my prayeere  
 3if<sup>t</sup> me my love my blisful lady deere 2260  
 whan thorisoun was doon of<sup>t</sup> Palomon  
 his sacrifice he dede and þat anoon  
 Ful pitously with alle circumstances  
 Al telle I nat<sup>t</sup> as now his obseruances 2264  
 But<sup>t</sup> at þe last<sup>t</sup> þe statu of<sup>t</sup> venus schook<sup>t</sup>  
 And made a signe wherby þat he took<sup>t</sup>  
 That<sup>t</sup> his prayer accepted was þat<sup>t</sup> day  
 For þough þe signe schewed a delay 2268  
 3et<sup>t</sup> wist<sup>t</sup> he wel þat graunted was his boone  
 And wip glad herte he went<sup>t</sup> him hom ful soone  
 The þrid hour in<sup>t</sup> equal þat<sup>t</sup> Palomon  
 Bigan to Venus temple for to goon 2272  
 vp roos þe sonne and vp roos Emelye  
 And to þe temple of<sup>t</sup> Dian gan sche hye  
 Hir maydens þat<sup>t</sup> sche wip hir þider ladde  
 Ful redily wip hem þe fyr þey hadde 2276  
 Thencens / þe cloþes and þemenant al  
 That to þe sacrifice longen schal  
 The hornes ful of<sup>t</sup> meth as is þe gyse /  
 Ther lakkeþ nou3t<sup>t</sup> to do here sacrifice 2280  
 Smokyng<sup>t</sup> þe temple ful of<sup>t</sup> cloþes faire  
 This Emelye wip herte debonaire  
 Hir body wessch wip wtir of<sup>t</sup> a welle  
 But how sche dide I ne dar nat<sup>t</sup> telle 2284  
 But<sup>t</sup> it be eny þing<sup>t</sup> in general

[leaf 81]

And ȝet it were a game to here it al  
 To him þat meneth wel it were no charge  
 But it is good a man be at his large 2288  
 hir brighte her was kempt vntressed al  
 A Corone of a grene Ok' cerial  
 vpon hir heed was set ful fair and meete  
 Tuo fyres on þe auter gan sche beete 2292  
 And did hir þinges as men may biholde  
 In state of Thebes and þe bokes olde  
 whan kynled was þe fyre wiþ pitous cheere /  
 vnto Dyan sche spak as ȝe may heere 2296  
**O** chaste goddes of þe woodes greene  
 To whom boþe heuen and erþe and see is scene  
 Queen of þe regne of pluto derk' and lowe  
 Goddes of maydenes þat myn hert has knowe 2300  
 Ful many a ȝeer / ȝe woot what I desire  
 As keep me fro þe vengans of þilk' yre  
 That atheon aboughte trewely  
 Chaste goddesse wel wost þou þat I 2304  
 Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf  
 Ne neuer wol I be no loue ne wyf  
 I am ȝit þou wost of þi company  
 A mayden and loue huntynge and venery 2308  
 And for to walken in þe woodes wylde  
 And nought to ben a wyf and be with chylde  
 Nouȝt wol I knowe þe company of man  
 Now helpe me lady syþnes ȝe may and kan 2312  
 For þe formes þat þou hast in þe  
 And Palomon þat haþ such loue to me  
 And eek' arcite þat loueþ me so sore  
 This grace I praye þe wiþouten more 2316  
 And sende loue and pees betwix hem two  
 And fro me torne a wey here hertes so  
 That al here hote loue and here desire  
 Al here besy torment and al here fyre 2320  
 Be queynt or turned in anoper place

And if so be þou wol do me no grace  
 Or if my destyne be schapid so [leaf 31, back]  
 That I schal needes haue on of hem two 2324  
 So send me him þat most desireþ me  
 Biholde goddes of clene chastite  
 The bitter teeres þat on my cheekes falle  
 Syn þou art mayde and keper of vs alle 2328  
 My maydenhode þou kepe and wel conserue  
 And whil I lyue a mayde I wil þe serue /  
**T**he fyres bren vpon þe auter cleer 2332  
 whil Emelye was in hire preyer  
 But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynt  
 For right anon on of þe fyres queynt  
 And quyked agayn and after þat anon  
 That oper fyr was queynt and al a-gon 2336  
 And as it queynt it made a whistelyng  
 As dop a wete brond in his brennyng  
 And at þe brondes end out ran anoon  
 As it were bloody dropes many oon 2340  
 For which so sore agast was Emelye  
 That sche wel neih mad was and gan to crie  
 For sche ne wiste what it signified  
 But oonely for feere þus sche cryed 2344  
 And wepte þat/ it was pite to heere  
 And þer-wip-al Dyane gan appeere  
 wip bow in hond right as a hunteresse  
 And seyð a doughter stynt þyn heuynesse 2348  
 Among þe goddes hye it is affermed  
 And by eterne word write & confermed  
 Thou schalt be wedded vnto oon of þo  
 That haue for þe so moche care and wo 2352  
 But vnto which of hem may I nat telle  
 Far wel for I may her no lenger dwelle  
 The fyres which þat on myn auter bren  
 Schuln þe declare or þat þou go hen 2356  
 Thyn aduenture of loue and in þis caas

And wip þat word þe arwes in þe caas  
 Of þe goddesse clatren faste and rynge  
 And forþ sche went and made a vanysschyng 2360  
 For which this Emelye astoneyd was [leaf 22]  
 And seide what amounteþ þis alas  
 I put me vnder þy proteccioun  
 Dyane and in þi disposicioun 2364  
 And hoom sche goþ anon þe nexte way  
 This is þeffect/ þer nys no mor to say  
**T**he nexte houre of mars folwyng þis 2368  
 Arcite to þe temple walkyd is /  
 To fyry mars to doon his sacrifise /  
 with al þe rightes of his payen wise  
 with pitous herte and heih deuocioun  
 Right thus to mars he sayd his orisoun 2372  
 O stronge god þat in þe reynes cold  
 Of trace honoured and lord art þou hold  
 And hast in euery regne and euery land  
 Of armes al þe bridel in þy hand 2376  
 And hem fortunest as þe lust deuysel  
 Accept/ of me my pitous sacrifise  
 If so be þat my ȝouthe may deserue  
 And þat my might be worpi to deserue 2380  
 Thy godhed þat/ I may be on of þine  
 Then pray I þe / to rewe on my pyne  
 For þilke peyne and þat hote fuyre  
 The which whilom þou brendest for desyre 2384  
 whan þat þou vstedest þe gret bewte  
 Of faire freissche Venus þat is so free  
 And haddest hir in armes at þy wille  
 And þough þe ones on a tyme mysfille 2388  
 whan Vlcanus had caught þe in his laas  
 And fand þe liggyng by his wyf allaas  
 For þilke sorwe þat was in þin herte  
 haue reuthe as wel vpon my peynes smerte 2392  
 I am ȝong and vnkonnyng as þou wost

And as I trowe / wiþ loue offendid most /  
 That euer was eny lyues creature /  
 For sche þat doth me / al þis wo endure 2396  
 Ne rekkeþ neuer wheþer I synke or flete  
 And wel I woot or sche me mercy heete  
 I moot wiþ strengþe wyn hir in þe place [leaf 32, back]  
 And wel I wot / wiþouten help or grace 2400  
 Of þe / ne may my strengthe nought auayle  
 Then help me lord to morn in my batayle  
 For þilke fyr that whilom brende þe  
 As wel as þis fire now brenneþ me 2404  
 And do to morn þat I haue þe victorie  
 Myn be þe trauail al þin be þe glorie  
 Thy souerein tempul wol I most honouren  
 Of any place / and al way most labouren 2408  
 In þy plesaunce / and þy craftes strong  
 And in þy tempul I wol my baner hong  
 And alle þe armes of my companye  
 And euermore vnto þat day I dye 2412  
 Eterne fyr I wol bifore þe fynde  
 And eek to þis / avow I wol me bynde  
 My berd myn heer þat hangeth longe a doun  
 That neuer 3it ne felt offensioun 2416  
 Of rasour ne of schere I wol þe 3iue  
 And be þy trewe seruaunt whiles I lyue  
 lord haue rowþe vppon my sorwes sore  
 3if me þy victorie I aske no more 2420  
**T**he preyer stynt / of Arcita þe strange  
 The rynges on þe tempul dore þat hange  
 And eek the dores clatereden ful fast  
 Of which arcita som what was agast 2424  
 The fires brenden on þe auter bright  
 That it gan al þe tempul for to light  
 A swote smel anon þe ground vp 3af  
 And arcita anon his hand vp haf 2428  
 And more encens in to þe fyr 3et cast

with opir rightes and þan atte last  
 The statu of mars bigan his hauberk' ryng'  
 And with þat' soun / he herd a murmuryng' 2432  
 Ful lowe and dym / and sayde þis victorie  
 For which he ȝaf to mars honour and glorie  
 And þus with ioie and hope wel to fare  
 Arcite anoon / vnto his Inne is fare / 2436  
 As fayn as foul is of þe bryghte sonne [leaf 38]  
 And right' anon such stryf' is bygonne  
 For þat grauntyng' in þe heuen aboue  
 Bitwix venus and þe goddes of loue 2440  
 And marcz þe sterne god armypotent'  
 That Iupiter was busy it' to stent'  
 Til þat þe pale Saturnes þe colde  
 That knew so many of auentures olde 2444  
 Fond in his experiens an art/  
 That he ful sone hap plesyd euery part'  
 And soþ is sayd eelde hap gret' auantage  
 In eelde is boþe wisdom and vsage 2448  
 Men may þe eelde at-ren but nat' at-rede  
 Saturne anon to stynte stryf' and drede  
 Al be it' þat' / it' be agayns his kynde  
 Of al þis stryf' he can remedy fynde 2452  
 My deere douȝter venus quod Satourne  
 My cours þat hap so wyde for to tourne  
 hap more power þan woot' eny man  
 Myn is þe drenchyng' in þe see so wan 2456  
 Myn is þe prisoun in þe derke cote  
 Myn is þe stranglyng' & hangyng' by þe þrote  
 The murmur and þe cherles rebellyng'  
 The groynyng' and þe pryue enpoysonyng' 2460  
 I do vengeance and pleyn correctioun  
 whiles I dwelle in þe signe of þe lyoun  
 Myn is þe ruen of þe hihe halles  
 The fallyng' of þe toures and þe walles 2464  
 Vpon þe mynour or þe Carpenter

I slowh Sampson in schakyng' þe piler  
 And myne ben þe maladies colde  
 The derke tresoun and þe castes olde 2468  
 Myn lokyng' is þe fadir of pestilens  
 Now wepe nomore I schal do my diligence  
 That Palomon þat is myn owen knight  
 Schal haue his lady as þou him bihight 2472  
 þow marcz schal kepe his kniȝt ȝet neuerþeles  
 Bitwixe ȝou þer moot som tyme be pees  
 Al be ȝe nouȝt of oo complexioun [leaf 33, back]  
 That ilke day causeþ such diuisioun 2476  
 I am þi ayel redy at þy wille  
 wepe þou no more I wol þi lust' fulfille  
 Now wol I stynt' of þe goddes aboue  
 Of mars and of venus goddes of loue 2480  
 And telle ȝou as plainly as I can  
 The grete effecte for þat I bigan  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
**G** Ret' was þe fest' in Athenus þat' day  
 And eek' þat' lusty sesoun of þat' may 2484  
 Made euery wiȝt' to ben in such plesaunce /  
 That' al the monday iousten þey and daunce  
 And spende hit' in venus heigh seruise /  
 But' by þe cause þat þey schuln arise 2488  
 Erly a morwe for to see þat' fight'  
 vnto þeir rest' wente þey at' nyght'  
 And on þe morwe whan þe day gan spryng'  
 Of hors and hernoys noyse and clateryng' 2492  
 Ther was in þe oostes al aboute  
 And to þe paleys rood þer many a route  
 Of lordes vpon steede and on/palfreys  
 Ther mayst' þou see deuysyng' of herneys 2496  
 So vncowþ and so riche wrought' & wel  
 Of goldsmithry of browdyng' and of steel

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The scheldes bright / testers and trappures  
 Gold-beten helmes / hauberks and cote armures 2500  
 lordes in paramentz on her coursers  
 knightes of retenu and eek squyers  
 Rayhyng' þe speres and helmes bokelyng'  
 Girdyng' of scheeldes wip layneres lasyng' 2504  
 Ther as need is / þey were noþing' ydel  
 Ther fomen steedes on þe golden bridel:  
 Gnawyng' and faste / armurers also  
 with fyle and hamer prikyng' to and fro 2508  
 zemen on foote / and knaues many oon  
 wip schorte staues as pikke as þey may goon  
 Pypes trompes nakers and Clariounes  
 þat' in þe batail blewe bloody sownes / 2512  
 The paleys ful of pepul vp and down [leaf 84]  
 heer þre / þer / ten / haldyng' her questioʒn  
 Dyuynyng' of þis Thebans knightes two  
 Som seyden þus / som seyð it' schal be so 2516  
 Som heelde with him with þe blake berd  
 Som wip þe ballyd som wip pikke hered  
 Som sayd he loked grym as he wold fight  
 he hap a sparth of .xx.<sup>ii</sup> pound of wight 2520  
 Thus was þe halle ful of deuynyng'  
 Lang' after þat' þe sonne gan to spryng'  
 The gret' Theseus / þat' of his sleep is awaked  
 with menstralcy and noyse þat' was maked 2524  
 held 3it' þe chambre of his paleys riche  
 Til þat' Thebanes knyȝtes boþe I-liche  
 honoured weren and in to Paleys fet  
 Duk' Theseus was at a wyndow set 2528  
 Arayed right' as he were god in trone  
 The pepul preseth þider was ful sone  
 him for to seen / and doon him reuerence  
 And eek' horken his hest' and his sentence 2532  
 An herowd on a skaffold made a hoo  
 Til al þe noyse of þe pepul was I-doo



And whan he sawh þe pepul of noyse al stille  
 Thus schewed he þe mighty dukes wille 2536  
**T**he lord hap of his heih discrecioun  
 Considered þat it were destruccioun  
 To gentil blood to fighten in þis wise  
 Of mortal batail now in þis Emprise 2540  
 were for to schapen þat þey schuld not dye  
 he wol his firste purpos modifye  
 No man þerfore vp peyne of los of lyf  
 No maner schot/ ne pollax ne schort knyft 2544  
 In to þe lystes sende or þider bryng  
 Ne schorte swerd for to stoke þe bytyng  
 No man ne drawe ne bere by his side /  
 Ne noman schal to his felawe ryde 2548  
 But oon cours with a scharpe spere  
 Feyne if him lust on foote himself to were  
 And he þat is at meschief schal be take / [leaf 34, back]  
 And nat slayn but be brought to þe stake 2552  
 That schal be ordeyned on eyþer syde  
 But þider he schal by force and þer abyde /  
 And if so falle a cheuenten be take  
 On eyþer side or elles sle his make / 2556  
 No lenger schal þe turneynge laste  
 God spede 3ou goþ forþ and ley on faste  
 wiþ long swerd and wiþ mace fi3t 3our fille  
 Goþ now 3our way þis is þe lordes wille 2560  
**T**he voice of þe poepul touchiþ heuen  
 So lowde cried þei with mylde steuen  
 God saue such a lord þat is so good  
 he wilneþ no destruccioun of blood 2564  
 vp goþ þe trompes and þe melodye  
 And to þe lystes ryde þe companye /  
 By ordynaunce þurgh þe cite large  
 Hangyng wiþ cloþ of gold and not wiþ Sarge 2568  
 Ful lik a lord þis nobul Duk cam ryde  
 These tuo Thebans on eyþer side

And after rood þe queen and Emelye  
 And after hem of ladyes anoper companye 2572  
 And after hem of comunes after here degre  
 And þus þey passeden þurgh þat cite  
 And to þe lystes come þei by tyme  
 It nas not of þe day ȝet fully pryme 2576  
 whan sette was Theseus riche and hye  
 ypolita þe queen and Emelye  
 And oper ladyes in here degrees aboute  
 vnto þe settes passeþ al þe route 2580  
 And westward þorugh þe ȝates of mart  
 Arcite and eek þe hundred of his part  
 with baners ys I-entred right anon  
 And þat selue moment Palomon 2584  
 Is vnder Venus Estward in þat place  
 with baner whyt and hardy cheer of face  
**I**N al þe world to seeke vp and doun  
 So euen wipoute Variacioun 2588  
 Ther nere suche companyes tweye [leaf 35]  
 For ther nas noon so wys þat cowþe seye  
 That any had of oper auauntage  
 Of worthines ne staat/ ne of visage 2592  
 So euene were þey chosen for to gesse  
 And in two Renges faire þey hem dresse  
 And whan he names I-rad were euerychon  
 That in here nombre gile were þer noon 2596  
 Tho were þe gates schitt and cried lowde  
 Doop now ȝour deuoir ȝonge knightes proude  
 The heraldȝ laften here prikyng vp & doun  
 Now ryngede þe tromp and Clarioun 2600  
 Ther is no more to say but Est and west  
 In goþ þe speres in to þe Rest  
 Ther seen men who can Iuste and who can ryde  
 In goþ þe scharpe spere in to þe side 2604  
 Ther schyueren schaftes vpon schuldres þyk  
 he feelep þurgh þe herte spon þe prik

vp sprengen speres on twenty foot on hight  
 Out' goon þe swerdes as þe siluer bright' 2608  
 The helmes þer to-hewen and to-schrede  
 Out' brast' þe blood wip stoute stremes reede  
 with mighty maces þe bones þay to-breste  
 he þurgh þe pikkest' of' þe þrong' gan preste 2612  
 Ther stomblen steedes strong' and doun can falle /  
 he rolled vnder foot' as dop a balle  
 he feyneþ on his foot wip his tronchoun  
 And him hurteleþ with his hors a doun 2616  
 He þurgh þe body hurt' is and sippen take  
 Maugre his heed and brouȝt' vnto þe stake /  
 As forward was right' þer he most' abyde /  
 Anoper lad is on þat' oper syde 2620  
 And som tyme dop Theseus hem to rest'  
 hem to refreissche and drinke if' hem lest'  
 Ful ofte a-day haue þis Thebans twoo  
 Togider y-met' and wrought' his felaw woo 2624  
 vnhorsed haþ ech oper of' hem tweye  
 Ther nas no Tygyr in þe vale of' Galgopleye  
 whan þat' hir whelp is stole whan it' is lite [leaf 35, back]  
 So cruel on þe hunt/ as is arcite 2628  
 For Ielous hert' vpon þis Palomon  
 Ne in Belmary þer is no fel lyoun  
 That' hunted is or for hunger wood  
 Ne of' his prey desireþ so þe blood 2632  
 As Palomon to sle his foo arcite  
 This Ielous strokes on here helmes byte  
 Out' renneþ blood on boþe here sides reede  
 Som tyme an ende þer is on euery dede 2636  
 For er þe sonne vnto þe reste went  
 The strang' kyng' Emetreus gan hent'  
 This Palomon as he faught' wip arcite  
 And his sword in his fleissch he did byte 2640  
 And by þe force of' .xx<sup>ii</sup> he is take  
 Vnȝolden and I-drawe vnto þe stake

And in þe Rescous of þis Palomon  
 The stronge kyng · ligurgius is born a down 2644  
 The kyng<sup>t</sup> Emetreus for al his strengþe  
 Is born out<sup>t</sup> of his sadel his swerdes lengþe  
 So hit<sup>t</sup> him palamon er he were take  
 But<sup>t</sup> al for nough<sup>t</sup> he was brought to þe stake / 2648  
 his hardy herte might<sup>t</sup> him helpe nouȝt<sup>t</sup>  
 He most<sup>t</sup> abyde whan þat<sup>t</sup> he was caught<sup>t</sup>  
 By force and eek<sup>t</sup> by composicioun  
 who sorweþ now but<sup>t</sup> Palomoun 2652  
 That<sup>t</sup> moot<sup>t</sup> no more gon agayn to fight<sup>t</sup>  
 And whan þat<sup>t</sup> Theseus had seen þat<sup>t</sup> sight<sup>t</sup>  
 he cryed hoo / nomore for it is doon  
 Ne noon schal lenger vnto his felaw goon 2656  
 I wol be trewe Iuge and nouȝt<sup>t</sup> partye  
 Arcyte of Thebes schal haue Emelye  
 That<sup>t</sup> hap by his fortune hire I-wonne  
 Anoon þer is noyse bygonne 2660  
 For ioie of þis so lowde and heye with alle  
 It semed þat<sup>t</sup> þe listes wolde falle  
 what<sup>t</sup> can now fayre Venus doon aboue  
 what<sup>t</sup> seiþ sche now what<sup>t</sup> dop þis queen of loue / 2664  
 But<sup>t</sup> wepeþ so for wantyng<sup>t</sup> of hir wille [leaf 36]  
 Til þat<sup>t</sup> hire teeres in þe lystes fille  
 Sche sayde I am aschamed douteles  
 Satournus seyde douȝter hold þy pees 2668  
 Mars hap his wille his knight<sup>t</sup> hap his boone  
 And by myn heed þou schalt<sup>t</sup> be esed soone  
 The trompes wiþ þe lowde mynstralcy  
 The herawdes þat<sup>t</sup> ful lowde ȝolle and cry 2672 ·  
 Been in here ioie / for daun arcyte  
 But<sup>t</sup> herkneþ me and styntep but a lite  
 which a miracle bifel anoon  
 This arcyte fersly hap don his helm a down 2676  
 And on his courser for to schewe his face  
 he priked endlange in þe large place

lokyng' vpward vpon his Emelye  
 And sche agayn him cast a frendly y3e 2680  
 For wommen as for to speke in comune  
 þay folwe alle þe fauour of fortune  
 And was alle his cheer and in his hert  
 Out' of þe ground a fyr infernal stert' 2684  
 From Pluto send at þe request' of Saturne  
 For which his hors for feere gan to turne  
 And leep a syde and foundred as he leep  
 And or þat' arcyte may take keep 2688  
 he pight' him on þe pomel of þe heed  
 That' in þat' place he lay as he were deed  
 his brest' tobroken with his sadil bowe  
 As blak' he lay as eny col or crowe 2692  
 So was þe blood y-ronne in his face  
 Anon he was y-born out of þe place  
 with herte sore to Theseus paleys  
 Tho was he coruen out of his harneys 2696  
 And in a bed y-brought' ful fair and blyue  
 For 3it he was in memory and on lyue  
 And alway cryeng' after Emelye  
 Duk' Theseus and al his companye 2700  
 Is comen hom to Athenes his Cite  
 with alle blys and gret' solempnite  
 Al be it þat' þis auenture was falle [leaf 86, back]  
 he nolde nought' discomfort' hem alle / 2704  
 Men seyde eek' þat' arcita schuld nought dye  
 he schal be helyd of his maladye  
 And of anoper þing þey were as fayn  
 • That' of hem alle þer was noon y-slayn 2708  
 Al were þey sore hurt' and namely oon  
 That' wip a spere was þirled his brest' boon  
 To oper woundes and to broken armes  
 Some hadde salue and some hadde charmes 2712  
 Fermacyes of herbes and eek' saue  
 They dronken for þey wolde here lyues haue

For which þis noble duk<sup>t</sup> as he wel can  
 Comforteþ and honoureþ euery man 2716  
 And made reuel al þe lange night<sup>t</sup>  
 vnto the straunge lordes as it was right<sup>t</sup>  
 Ne þer was holden to discomfytyng<sup>t</sup>  
 But<sup>t</sup> as a Iustes or as a turmentyng<sup>t</sup> 2720  
 For soply þer was no discomfiture  
 For fallyng<sup>t</sup> is but<sup>t</sup> an aduenture  
 Ne to be lad wip fors vnto þe stake  
 Vn3olden and wip twenty knightes take 2724  
 A person allone wipouten moo  
 And rent<sup>t</sup> forþ by arme foot<sup>t</sup> and too  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> his steede dryuen forþ wip staues  
 wip foote men boþe 3emen and knaues 2728  
 It<sup>t</sup> was aretted him no vylonye  
 Ne no maner man held it<sup>t</sup> no cowardye  
**F**Or which Theseus lowd anon leet crie  
 To stynten al rancour and al enuye 2732  
 The gree as wel on o syde as on oþer  
 And euery side lik<sup>t</sup> as oþeres broþer  
 And 3af<sup>t</sup> hem 3iftes after here degre  
 And fully heeld a feste dayes þre 2736  
 And conueyed þe knightes worþily  
 Out<sup>t</sup> of his toun a iournee largely  
 And hom went<sup>t</sup> euery man þe righte way  
 Ther was no more but<sup>t</sup> far wel haue good day 2740  
 Of þis batayl I wol no more endite [leaf 37]  
 But<sup>t</sup> speke of<sup>t</sup> Palomon and of<sup>t</sup> arcyte  
**S**welleþ þe brest<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> Arcyte and þe sore  
 Encresceþ at his herte more and more 2744  
 The clopred blood for eny lechecraft  
 Corrupith and in his bouk<sup>t</sup> I-laft<sup>t</sup>  
 That<sup>t</sup> noþer veyne blood ne ventusyng  
 Ne drynk<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> herbes may ben his helpyng<sup>t</sup> 2748  
 Tne vertu expulsik<sup>t</sup> or animal  
 For þilke vertu cleped natural

Ne may þe venym voyde ne expelle  
 The pypes of his lounge gan to swelle 2752  
 And euery lacerte in his brest adoun  
 Is schent with venym and corrupcioun  
 Him gaynep noþer for to get his lyf  
 Vomyt vp-ward ne dounward laxatif / 2756  
 Al is to-broken þilke regioun  
 Nature haþ now no dominacioun  
 And certeynly wher nature wil not wirche  
 Far wel phisik go bere þe man to chirche 2760  
 This al and som þat arcyte moste dye  
 For which he sendeþ after Emelye  
 And Palomon þat was his cosyn deere  
 Thanne seyde he þus as ȝe schul after heere 2764  
 Naught may þe woful spirit/ in myn herte  
 Declare a poynt of my sorwes smerte  
 To ȝou my lady þat I loue most  
 But I byquethe þe seruice of my gost 2768  
 To ȝou abouen euery creature  
 Syn þat my lyf may no lenger dure  
 Allas þe woo allas þe peynes stronge  
 That I for ȝou haue suffred and so longe 2772  
 Allas þe deþ allas myn Emelye  
 Allas departyng of our companye  
 Allas myn hertes queen allas my wyf  
 Myn hertes lady ender of my lyf 2776  
 what is þis world what asken men to haue  
 Now wiþ his loue now in his colde graue  
 Allone wiþouten eny companye [leaf 87, back]  
 Far wel my swete far wel myn Emelye 2780  
 And softe take me in ȝour armes tweye  
 For loue of god and herkneþ what I seye  
 I haue heer with my cosyn Palomon  
 had stryf and rancour many a day I-gon 2784  
 For loue of ȝow and eek for Ielousie /  
 And Iupiter so wis my sowle gye

To speken of a seruaunt proprely  
 with alle circumstaunces trewely 2788  
 That is to seyn troupe honour and knighthede  
 wysdom humblesse astat. and by kynrede  
 Fredam and al þat longeþ to þat art  
 So Iupiter haue of my soule part 2792  
 As in þis world right now ne know I non  
 So worthy to be loued as Palomon  
 That serueth ȝou and wol do al his lyf  
 And if þat ȝe schul euer be a wyf 2796  
 Forȝet not Palomon þat gentil man  
 And with þat word his speche faile gan  
 For fro his herte vp to his brest was come  
 The cold of deþ þat him had ouercome 2800  
 And ȝet more ouer in his armes twoo  
 þe vital strengþ is lost and al a-goo  
 Only the intellect wiþouten more  
 That dwelled in his herte sik and sore 2804  
 Gan fayle whan þe herte felte deth  
 Duskyng his eyȝen two and fayled breth  
 But on his lady ȝit he cast his ye  
 his laste word was mercy Emelye / 2808  
 His spiryt chaunged was and wente þer  
 As I cam neuer I can nat tellen wher  
 Therefore I stynte I nam no dyuynistre /  
 Of soules fynde I not in þis registre 2812  
 Ne me list nat thopynyouns to telle  
 Of hem þough þat þei wyten wher þey dwelle  
 Arcyte is cold ther mars his soule gye  
 Now wol I speke forþ of Emelye / 2816  
 Shright Emely and howled Palomon [leaf 38]  
 And Theseus his sustir took anon  
 Swownyng and bar hir fro þe corps a way  
 what helpeþ it to tarye forþ þe day 2820  
 To telle how þat sche weep boþe eue & morwe  
 For in swich caas wommen can haue such sorwe



whan þat here housbonds ben from hem ago  
 That for þe more part þey sorwen so 2824  
 Or elles fallen in such maladye  
 That atte laste certeynly þey dye  
 Infynyt been þe sorwes and þe teeres  
 Of olde folk þat ben of tendre ȝeeres 2828  
 So gret a wepyng was þer noon certayn  
 whan Ector was I-brought al freissh I-slayn  
 As þat þer was for dep of þis Theban  
 For sorwe of him þer weepþ boþe child and man 2832  
 At troye alas þe pite þat was þere  
 Cracchyng of cheekes rendyng eek of here  
 why woldist / þou be deed þis wommen crye  
 And haddest gold ynowȝ and Emelye 2836  
 No man mighte / glade Theseus /  
 Sauyng his olde fader Egeus /  
 That knew þis worldes transmutacioun  
 As he hadde seen it torne vp and down 2840  
 Ioye after woo and woo aftir gladnesse  
 And schewed him ensample and likenesse  
**R**ight as þer deyde neuer man quod he  
 That he ne lyued in erþe in som degree 2844  
 ȝit þer ne lyuede neuer man he seyde  
 In al þis world þat som tyme he ne deyde  
 This world nys but a þurghfare ful of woo  
 And we ben pilgryms passyng to and fro 2848  
 Dep is an ende of euery worldly sore  
 And ouer al þis ȝit seide he mochil more  
 To þis effect // ful wysly to enhort  
 The peple þat schulde him recomforte 2852  
**D**uk Theseus with al his busy cure  
 Cast busyly wher þat þe sepulture  
 Of good arcyte may best y-maked be [leaf 33, back]  
 And eek most honorable in his degre 2856  
 And atte last he took conclusioun  
 That ther as first Arcite and Palomon

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hadden for loue þe batail hem bytwene  
 That in the selue groue soote and greene 2860  
 Ther as he hadde his amorous desires  
 His compleynt and for loue his hote fyres  
 he wolde make a fyr in which thoffice  
 Funeral he might al accomplice 2864  
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe /  
 The Okes olde and lay hem on a rewe  
 In culpouns wel arrayed for to brenne  
 his officers wip swifte foot þey renne 2868  
 And ryde anon at his comaundement  
 And after þis Theseus hath I-sent  
 After a beer and it al ouer spradde  
 wip cloþ of golde þe richest þat he hadde 2872  
 And of þe same sute he clad arcyte  
 vpon his hondes were his gloues white  
 Eke on his heed a croune of laurer grene /  
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene 2876  
 He leyde him bare þe visage on þe beere  
 Ther wip he weep þat pite was to heere  
 And for þe poeple schulde see him alle /  
 whan it was day he brought hem to þe halle 2880  
 That roreth of þe cry and of þe soun  
 Tho cam þis woful Theban Palomoun  
 wip flotery berd and ruggy asschy heeres  
 In cloþis blak y-dropped al wip teeres 2884  
 And passyng oper of wepyng Emelye  
 The rewfullest of al þe companye  
 In as moche as þe seruice schulde be  
 The more nobul and riche in his degre 2888  
 Duk Theseus leet forth þre steedes bryng  
 That trapped were in steel al gliteryng  
 And couered wip armes of dan arcyte  
 Vpon þe steedes that weren grete & white 2892  
 Ther seeten folk / of which oon bar his scheeld [leaf 89]  
 Anoper his spere vp in his hondes heeld

The þridde bar with him his bowe turkeys  
 Of brend gold was þe caas and eek' þe herneys 2896  
 And riden forth a paas with sorwful chere  
 Toward þe groue as 3e schul after heere  
 The noblest' of þe grekes þat' þer were  
 vpon here schuldres carieden þe beere 2900  
 with slak' paas and eyhen reed and wete  
 Thurgh-out' þe cite by þe maister streete  
 That' sprad was al with blak' and wonder hye  
 Right' of þe same is al þe stret' I-wrye 2904  
 vpon þe right' hond went' olde Egeus  
 And on þat' oþer syde duk' Theseus  
 with vessels in here hand with gold wel fyn  
 As ful of hony mylk' and blood and wyn 2908  
 Eke Palomon with a gret companye  
 And after þat' com woful Emelye  
 with fyr in hond as was þat' tyme þe gyse /  
 To do þoffice of funeral seruisse 2912  
**H**ey3 labour and ful gret apparailynge  
 was at þe seruice and at þe fyr makynge  
 That' with his grene top þe heuen raughte  
 And twenty fadme of brede tharme straughte / 2916  
 This is to seyn þe boowes were so brode  
 Of stree first' was þer leyd ful many a loode  
 but' how þe fyr was makyd vpon highte  
 Ne eek' þe names how þe trees highte 2920  
 As Ook' · fyr · birch · asp · aldir · holm · popler ·  
 wilw. elm plane. assch. box. chesteyn lynde laurer.  
 Mapul. thorn · beech · hasil · ew · wyppyltre  
 how þey weren felde schal nouzt be told for me 2924  
 Ne how þe goddes ronnen vp and doun  
 Disheryt of here habitacioun  
 In which þey whilom woned in rest/ and pees  
 Nymphes. Faunes and Amadryes 2928  
 Ne how þe beestes and þe briddes alle  
 Fledden for feere / whan þe woode was falle /

84 GROUP A. § 2. KNIGHT'S TALE. Harleian 7334.

Ne how þe ground agast' was of þe light' [leaf 39, back]  
 That' was nought' wont' to see no sonne bright' 2932  
 Ne how þe fyr was couchid first' wip stree  
 And þanne with drye stykkes clouen in three  
 And þanne wip grene woode and spicerie  
 And þanne wip cloth of gold and wip perrye 2936  
 And gerlandes hangyng' with ful many a flour  
 The myrre thensens wip also gret' odour  
 Ne how arcyte lay among' al þis  
 Ne what' richesse / aboute his body is 2940  
 Ne how þat' Emely as was þe gyse  
 Putt' in þe fyr of funeral seruise  
 Ne how she swowned whan sche made þe fyre  
 Ne what' sche spak' ne what' was hire desire 2944  
 Ne what' iewels men in þe fyr þo cast'  
 whan þat' þe fyr was gret' and brente fast'  
 And how sum caste hir scheeld and summe her spere  
 And of here vestimentz which þat' þey were 2948  
 And cuppes ful of wyn and mylk' and blood  
 Vnto þe fyr þat' brent' as it were wood  
 Ne how þe gregoyz wip an huge route  
 Thre tymes ryden al þe fyr aboute 2952  
 vpon þe lefte hond with an heih schoutyng'  
 And þries wip here speres clateryng'  
 And þries how þe ladyes gan to crye  
 Ne how þat' lad was homeward Emelye . 2956  
 Ne how arcyte is brent' to aschen colde /  
 [ . . . . . no gap in the MS.  
 Al thilke night' ne how þe grekes pleye /  
 The wake pleyes kepe I nat' to seye 2960  
 who wrastleþ best' naked wip oyle enoynt'  
 Ne who þat' bar him best' in no disoynt  
 I wol not' telle eek' how þat' þey ben goon  
 Hom til athenes whan þe pley is doon 2964  
 But' schortly to þe poynt' now wol I wende  
 And maken of my longe tale an ende

**B**y proces and by lengþe of certeyn 3eres  
 Al styntyd is þe mornyng' and þe teeres 2968  
 Of alle grekys by oon general assent  
 Than semed me ther was a parlement' [leaf 40]  
 At athenes on a certeyn poynt / and cas  
 Among' þe whiche poyntes spoken was 2972  
 To han wiþ certeyn contrees alliaunce /  
 And haue fully of Thebans obeissance  
 For which þis noble Theseus anon  
 let' senden after gentil Palomon 2976  
 Vnwist' of him what' was þe cause and why  
 But' in his blake cloþes sorwfully  
 he cam at' his comaundement in hye  
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye 2980  
 whan þey were sette and hussht' was al þe place  
 And Theseus abyden hadde a space  
 Or eny word cam fro his wyse brest'  
 His eyen set' he þer as was his lest 2984  
 And wiþ a sad visage he syked stille  
 And after þat' right' þus he seide his wille  
**T**he firste moeuere of þe cause aboue  
 what' he first made þe fayre cheyne of loue 2988  
 Gret was theffect / and heigh was his entente /  
 wel wist' he why and what þerof' he mente  
 For which þat' faire cheyne of loue he bond  
 The fyr þe watir eyr and eek þe lond 2992  
 In certeyn boundes þat' þey may not' flee  
 That' same prynce and moeuere eek quod he /  
 hap' stabled in þis wrecched world a doun  
 Certeyn dayes and duracioun' 2996  
 To alle þat' er engendrid in þis place  
 Ouer þe day þey may nat pace  
 Al mowe they 3it wel here dayes abregge  
 Ther needeþ non auctorite tallegge 3000  
 For it' is preued by experience  
 But' þat' me lust' declare my sentence

Than may men wel by þis ordre discerne  
 That þilke moeuere stabul is and eterne 3004  
 wel many men knewe but it be a fool  
 That euery partye dyryueþ from his hool  
 For nature haþ nat take his bygynnyng  
 Of no partye ne cantel of a þing [leaf 40, back] 3008  
 But of a þing þat parfyt is and stable /  
 Descendyng so til it be corumpable  
 And þerfore of his wyse purueaunce /  
 He hath so wel biset his ordenaunce 3012  
 That spices of þinges and progressiouns  
 Schullen endure by successiouns  
 And nat eterne be wipoute lye  
 This maistow vnderstand and se at ye 3016  
**L**O þe Ook þat haþ so long norisschyng  
 Fro tyme þat it gynneþ first to spring  
 And as so long a lyf as we may see  
 3et atte laste wasted is þe tree 3020  
**C**onsidereþ eek how þat þe harde stoon  
 vnder oure foot / on which we trede and goon  
 3it wasteth it as it lip by þe weye  
 The brode Ryuer som tyme wexeþ dreye 3024  
 The grete townes see we wane and wende  
 Than may I see þat al þing haþ an ende  
**O**F man and womman se we wel also /  
 That wendeþ in oon of þis termes two 3028  
 That is to seyn / in 3ouþe or elles in age  
 he moot ben deed / þe kyng as schal a page /  
 Sum in his bed som in þe deepe see  
 Som in þe large feel as men may se / 3032  
 Ther helpeþ naught al goþ þilke weye  
 Thanne may I see wel þat al þing schal deye  
 what makeþ þis but Iubiter þe kyng  
 The which is prynce and cause of alle thing 3036  
 Conuertyng al vnto his propre wille  
 From which he is dereyned soþ to telle /

And here agayn no creature of lyue  
 Of no degre auaylep for to stryue 3040  
**T**han is it wisdom as þenkep me  
 To maken vertu of necessite  
 And take it wel þat we may nat eschewe  
 And namely þat þat to vs alle is dewe / 3044  
 And who-so gruccheþ aught he dop folye  
 And rebel is to him þat al may gye [leaf 41]  
 And certeynly a man hap most honour  
 To deyen in his excellence and flour 3048  
 whan he is siker of his goode name  
 Than hap he doon his freend ne him no schame  
 And gladder ought his freend ben of his dep  
 whan with honour is zolden vp þe breth 3052  
 Thanne whan his name appeled is for age  
 For al forgeten is his vasselage  
 Thanne is it best as for a worþi fame  
 To dye whan a man is best of name 3056  
 The contrary of al this is wilfulnesse  
 why grucchen we why haue we heuynesse /  
 That good arcyte of chyualry þe flour  
 Departed is with worschip and honour 3060  
 Out of þis foule prisoun of þis lyf  
 why gruccheþ heer his cosyn and his wyf  
 Of his wel fare þat louen him so wel  
 Can he hem thank / nay / god woot neuer a del 3064  
 That boþe his soule and eek hem self offende  
 And zet þey may here lustes nat amende  
**T**hat may I conclude of þis longe serye  
 But aftir wo I rede vs to be merye 3068  
 And þanke Iubiter al of his grace  
 And or þat we departe fro þis place /  
 I rede þat we make of sorwes two  
 O parfyt ioye lastyng euer mo 3072  
 And lokep now wher most sorwe is her-Inne /  
 Ther wol we first amenden and bygynne /

Sustyr quod he þis is my ful assent  
 wip al thaups heer of my parlement 3076  
 That gentil Palomon 3our owne knight  
 That serueþ 3ow with herte wil and might  
 And euer hap doon syn fyrst tyme 3e him knewe  
 That 3e schul of 3our grace vpon him rewe 3080  
 And take him for 3our housbond and for lord  
 Lene me 3oure hand for þis is oure acord  
 let see now of 3our wommanly pite  
 he is a kynges broþir sone pardee [leaf 41, back] 3084  
 And þough he were a pore bachiller  
 Syn he hap serued 3ou so many a 3eer  
 And had for 3ou so gret aduersite  
 hit moste be considered trusteþ me 3088  
 For gentil mercy aughte passe right  
 Than seyde he þus to Palomon ful right  
 I trowe þer needeþ litel sermonyng  
 To make 3ou assente to þis þing 3092  
 Com neer and tak 3our lady by þe hond  
 Bitwix hem was I-maad anon þe bond  
 That highte matrimoyn or mariage  
 By alle þe counseil and þe baronage 3096  
 And thus with blys and eek wip melodye  
 Hap Palomon I-wedded Emelye  
 And god þat al þis wyde world hap wrought  
 Send him his loue þat hap it deere I-bought 3100  
 For now is Palomon in al his wele  
 Lyuyng in blisse richesse and in hele  
 And Emely him loueth so tendirly  
 And he hir serueþ also gentilly 3104  
 That neuer wordes hem bitweene  
 Of gelousy ne of non opir teene /  
 Thus endeþ Palomon and Emelye  
 And god saue al þis fayre companye / Amen. 3108  
 Here endeþ þe knightes tale



[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And þus bygynneþ þe prologe of þe myllere

**W**Han þat þe knight had þus his tale I-told  
In al þe route nas þer 3ong' ne old  
That he ne seyde it was a noble story

And worpi to be drawn in memory 3112

And namely þe gentils euerich oon

Oure host þo lowh and swoor so moot I goon

This goþ right wel vnboked is þe male /

Let se now who schal telle anoper tale 3116

For trewely þis game is wel bygonne /

Now telleþ now sir monk' if þat 3e konne

Som what to quyte wip þe knightes tale /

The Myller þat for drunken was al pale 3120

So þat vnnethe vpon his hors he sat

[*leaf 42*]

he wold auale nowþer hood ne hat

Ne abyde no man for his curtesye

But in Pilates voys he gan to crye 3124

And swor by armes and by blood and bones

I can a noble tale for þe noones

with which I wol now quyte þe knightes tale

Oure hoost saugh wel how dronke he was of ale 3128

And seyde Robyn abyde my leue broþer

Som bettre man schal telle vs first anoper

Abyd and let vs worken priftyly

By goddes soule quod he þat wol nat I 3132

For I wol speke or elles go my way

Oure host answed / tel on a deuel way

Thou art a fool þy witt is ouercome /

¶ Now herkneþ quod þis myller al and some 3136

But first I make a protestacioun

That I am dronke I knowe wel by my soun

And þefore if þat I mys speke or seye

wyte it þe ale of Southwerk I 3ou preye 3140

For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
 Bothe of a Carpenter and of his wyf  
 how þat þe clerk hap set þe wriztes cappe /  
**T**he reue answered and seyde stynt þi clappe / 3144  
 let be þy lewed drunken harlottrye  
 It is a synne and eek a greet folye  
 To apeyren eny man or him defame  
 And eek to brynge wyues in ylle name 3148  
 Thou mayst ynow of oþer þinges seyn  
 This dronken Miller spak ful sone a-geyn  
 And seyde leue brother Osewold  
 who hath no wyf he is no Cokewold 3152  
 But I seye not þerfore þat þou art oon  
 Ther been ful goode wyues many oon  
 And euer a þousand goode agayns oon badde  
 That knowest þou wel þy self but if þou madde 3156  
 why art þou angry with my tale now /  
 I haue a wyf *par* de as wel as thow  
 3it nolde I for the oxen in my plough [leaf 42, back]  
 Take vpon me more þan ynough 3160  
 Though þat þou deme þiself þat þou be oon  
 I wol bileue wel þat I am <sup>1</sup>oon [1 a later n prefat]  
 An housbond schal not be inquisityf  
 Of goddes pryete ne of his wyf 3164  
 So þat he fynde goddes foyssoun þere  
 Of þe remenaunt needeþ nought enquire /  
 what schuld I seye but þat þis proud Millere  
 he nolde his wordes for no man forbere 3168  
 But tolde his cherlich tale in his manere  
 Me apinkeþ þat I schal reherce it heere  
 And þerfor euery gentil wight I preye.  
 For goddes loue as deme nat þat I seye 3172  
 Of yuel entent but for I moot reherse  
 here wordes alle ¶ al be þey better or werse  
 Or elles falsen som of my mateere  
 And þerfor who-so list it nat to heere 3176

Turne ouer þe leef<sup>þ</sup> and cheese anoþer tale  
For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret<sup>þ</sup> and smale  
Of storial þing<sup>þ</sup> þat<sup>þ</sup> toucheþ gentilesse  
And eek<sup>þ</sup> more ryalte and holynesse 3180  
Blameþ nat me If<sup>þ</sup> þat<sup>þ</sup> ȝe cheese amys  
The Miller is a cherl ȝe know wel þis  
So was þe reeve and opir many mo  
And harlotry þey tolden boþe two 3184  
Auyseþ ȝou and put<sup>þ</sup> me out / of blame  
And men schulde nat make earnest<sup>þ</sup> of game  
Here endeþ þe prologe of<sup>þ</sup> þe Miller

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And bygynneth his tale

m þer was dwellyng' at Oxenford  
 che gnof' that' gestes heeld to boorde  
 l of his craft' he was a Carpenter 3189  
 him þer was dwellyng' a pore scoler  
 lerned art' but' al his fantasye  
 was torned for to lerne astrologye 3192  
 An cowde a certeyn of conclusiouns  
 To deme by interrogaciouns  
 If þat men axed him in certeyn houres [? leaf 48]  
 1 whan þat men schuld han drougt' or ellys schoures 3196  
 Or if men axed him what schulde bifalle  
 Of enery þing I may nouȝt' reken hem alle  
 This clerk' was cleped heende Nicholas  
 Of derne loue he cowde and of solas 3200  
 And þer wiþ he was sleigh and ful priue  
 And lik' amayden meke for to se  
 A chambir had he in his hostillerye  
 Alone wiþouten eny compaignye 3204  
 Ful fetisly I-dight' with herbes soote /  
 And he himself' as swete as is þe roote  
 Of lokorys or eny Cetewale  
 his almagest' and bookes gret and smale 3208  
 his astrylabe longyng' for his art  
 his augrym stoonas leyen faire a part'  
 On schelues couched at' his beddes heed  
 his presse I-couered wiþ a faldyng' reed 3212  
 And al aboue þer lay a gay Sawtrye  
 On which he made a nightes melodye  
 So swetely þat' al þe chambur rang'  
 And angelus ad virginem he sang' 3216  
 And after þat he sang' þe kynges note  
 Ful often bliased was his mery þrote

And þus þis sweete clerk<sup>t</sup> his tyme spente  
 After his frendes fyndyng<sup>t</sup> and his rente 3220  
**T**his carpenter had weddid newe a wyf<sup>t</sup>  
 which þat<sup>t</sup> he loved more þan his lyf<sup>t</sup>  
 Of eyzteteene ȝeer sche was of<sup>t</sup> age  
 Gelous he was and heeld hir narwe in cage 3224  
 For sche was wilde & ȝong<sup>t</sup> and he was old  
 And demed himself<sup>t</sup> be lik<sup>t</sup> a Cokewold  
 he knew nat Catoun for his wit<sup>t</sup> was rude  
 That<sup>t</sup> bad man schulde wedde his similitude 3228  
 Men schulde wedde aftir here astaat<sup>t</sup>  
 For eelde and ȝoupe ben often at<sup>t</sup> debaat<sup>t</sup>  
 But<sup>t</sup> syn þat<sup>t</sup> he was brouȝt<sup>t</sup> in to þe snare  
 He moste endure as opere doon his care 3232  
 Fair was þe ȝonge wyf<sup>t</sup> and þer wiþ al  
 As eny wesil hir body gent and smal [leaf 43, back]  
 A seynt<sup>t</sup> sche wered barred al of<sup>t</sup> silk<sup>t</sup>  
 A barmcloþ eek<sup>t</sup> as whit<sup>t</sup> as morne mylk<sup>t</sup> 3236  
 vpon hir lendes ful of<sup>t</sup> many a gore  
 whit<sup>t</sup> was hir smok<sup>t</sup> and browdid albyfore  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> byhynde on hir coler aboute  
 Of coleblak<sup>t</sup> silk<sup>t</sup> wiþinne and eek<sup>t</sup> wiþoute 3240  
 The tapes of<sup>t</sup> hir white voluper  
 weren of<sup>t</sup> þe same sute of hire coler  
 hir filet<sup>t</sup> brood of<sup>t</sup> silk<sup>t</sup> y-set ful heye  
 And certeynly sche hadd a licorous eyȝe 3244  
 Ful smal y-pulled weren hir browes two /  
 And þo were bent as blak<sup>t</sup> as a slo  
 Sche was wel more blisful on to see  
 Than is þe newe perionette tree 3248  
 And softer þan þe wol is of<sup>t</sup> a weþir  
 And by hir gurdil hyng a purs of<sup>t</sup> leþir  
 Tassid wiþ silk<sup>t</sup> and perled wiþ latoun  
 In al þis world to seken vp and doun 3252  
 Ther nys no man so wys þat coupe þenche /  
 So gay a popillot<sup>t</sup> or such a wenche /

For brighter was þe smylyng<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> hir hewe  
 Than in þe tour þe noble I-forged newe 3256  
 But<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> hir song<sup>t</sup> it<sup>t</sup> was as lowde and 3erne  
 As eny swalwe chiteryng<sup>t</sup> on a berne  
 Ther to sche cowde skippe and make game  
 As eny kyde or calf<sup>t</sup> folowyng<sup>t</sup> his dame 3260  
 hir mouth was sweete as bragat<sup>t</sup> is or meth  
 Or hoord of<sup>t</sup> apples layd in hay or heth  
 wynsyng<sup>t</sup> sche was as is a Ioly colt<sup>t</sup>  
 long<sup>t</sup> as a mast<sup>t</sup> / and vpright<sup>t</sup> as a bolt / 3264  
 A broch sche bar vpon hir loue coleer  
 As brod as is þe bos of<sup>t</sup> a bocleer  
 hir schos were laced / on hir legges hey3e  
 Sche was a primerole<sup>1</sup> a pigges ney3e 3268  
 For eny lord haue liggyng<sup>t</sup> in his bedde [<sup>1</sup> a later & is put in here]  
 Or 3et<sup>t</sup> for eny good 3eman to wedde  
 Now sir and eft<sup>t</sup> sir / so bifel þe cas  
 That<sup>t</sup> on a day þis heende Nicholas [leaf 44] 3272  
 Fil wiþ þis 3onge wyf<sup>t</sup> to rage and pleye  
 whil þat<sup>t</sup> hir housbond was at<sup>t</sup> Oseneye  
 As clerkes ben ful sotil and ful queynte  
 And pryuely he caught hir by þe queynte 3276  
 And seyde I-wis but if<sup>t</sup> I haue my wille  
 For derne loue of<sup>t</sup> þe lemman I spille /  
 And heeld hir harde by þe haunche boones  
 And seyde lemman loue me al at<sup>t</sup> ones 3280  
 Or I wol dye as wisly god me saue  
 And sche sprang<sup>t</sup> out<sup>t</sup> / as dop a colt<sup>t</sup> in traue  
 And wiþ hir heed sche wried fast<sup>t</sup> away  
 I seyde I wol nat<sup>t</sup> kisse þe by my fey 3284  
 why let<sup>t</sup> be quod sche / lat<sup>t</sup> be þou nicholas /  
 Or I wol crye out<sup>t</sup> harrow and allas  
 Do wey 3our handes for 3our curtesye  
 This nicholas gan mercy for to crye 3288  
 And spak<sup>t</sup> so faire and profred him so faste/  
 That<sup>t</sup> sche hir loue him graunted atte laste /

And swor hir oth / by seynt thomas of kent  
 That sche wol be at his comaundement 3292  
 whan þat sche may hir leysir wel aspye  
 Myn housbond is so ful of Ielousie /  
 That but 3e wayten wel and be pryue  
 I woot right wel I am but deed quod sche 3296  
 3e mosten be ful derne as in þis caas  
 Ther of ne care þe nought quod Nicholas  
 A clerk hap litherly byset his while  
 But if he cowde a carpenter bygyle 3300  
 And þus þey ben acorded and I-sworn  
 To wayte a tyme as I haue told biforn  
**W**han Nicholas had doon þus euery del  
 And thakked hire aboute þe lendys wel 3304  
 he kist hir sweet / and takeþ his sawtrye  
 And pleyeþ fast and makeþ melodye  
 Than fyl it þus / þat to þe parisch chirche /  
 Cristes owen werkes for to wirche 3308  
 This goode wyf / went on an haly day  
 Hir forheed schon as bright as eny day [leaf 44, back]  
 So was it waisschen whan sche leet hir werk  
**N**ow þer was of þat chirche a parisch clerk 3312  
 The which þat was I-cleped Absolon  
 Crulle was his heer and as þe gold it schon  
 And strowted as a fan right large and brood  
 Ful streyt and euene lay his ioly schood 3316  
 his rode was reed his eyzen gray as goos  
 with Powles wyndowes coruen in his schoos  
 In his hoses reed he went fetusly  
 I-clad he was ful smal and propurly 3320  
 Al in a kirtel of a fyn wachet  
 Schapen with goores in þe newe get  
 And þer vpon he had a gay surplys  
 As whyt as is þe blosme vpon þe rys 3324  
 A mery child he was so god me saue  
 wel coupe he lete blood and clippe and schaue

And make a chartre of lond and acquitaunce  
 In twenty maners he coude skip and daunce 3328  
 After þe scole of Oxenforde þo  
 And wiþ his legges casten to and fro  
 And pleyen songes on a smal rubible  
 Therto he sang som tyme a lowde quynyble 3332  
 And as wel coude he pleye on a giterne /  
 In al þe toun nas brewhous ne tauerne  
 That he ne visited with his solas  
 Ther as any gaylard tapster was 3336  
 Bot soþ to say he was som del squaymous  
 Of fartyng / and of speche daungerous  
 This absolon þat ioly was and gay  
 Gop wiþ a senser on þe haly day 3340  
 Sensyng þe wyues of þe parisch fast  
 And many a louely look on hem he cast  
 And namely on þis Carpenteres wyf  
 To loke on hire him þought a mery lyf 3344  
 Sche was so propre sweete and licorous  
 I dar wel sayn if sche had ben a mous  
 And he a cat he wold hir hent anoon  
 This parisch clerk this Ioly Absolon [leaf 45] 3348  
 Hap in his herte such a loue longyng  
 That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng /  
 For curtesy he seyde he wolde noon  
 The moone at night ful cleer and brighte schoon 3352  
 And absolon his giterne hap I-take  
 For paramours he seyde he wold awake /  
 And for he gop iolyf and amerous /  
 Til he cam to þe Carpenteres hous 3356  
 A litel after þe cok had y-crowe /  
 And dressed him vp by a schot wyndowe /  
 That was vnder þe Carpenteres wal  
 he syngeþ in his voys gentil and smal 3360  
 Now deere lady if þi wille be  
 I praye 3ow þat 3e wol rewe on me



Ful wel acordyng' to his gyternyng'  
 This carpenter awook' and herde him syng' 3364  
 And spak' vnto his wyf' and sayde anoon  
 what' alisoun herestow not absolon  
 That' chaunteþ þus vnder oure boure smal  
 And sche answerd hir housbond þer wip al 3368  
 3is God woot' Iohn I heere it' euery del  
**T**his passeþ forth what' wil 3e bet' þan wel  
 Fro day to day þis Ioly Absolon  
 So woweþ hire þat him is wo bigon 3372  
 he wakeþ al þe night' and al þe day  
 To kembe his lokkes brode and made him gay  
 he wowith hire by mene and by brocage  
 And swor he wolde ben hir owne page / 3376  
 he syngeþ crowyng' as a nightyngale  
 And sent' hire pymen't meth and spiced ale /  
 And wafres pypyng' hoot' out' of' þe gleede  
 For þat' sche was of' toune he profred meede 3380  
 For som folk' wol be wonne for richesse  
 And som for strokes som for gentillesse  
 Som tyme to schewe his lightnes and maistrye  
 he pleyeth herod; on a scaffold hye 3384  
 But' what' avayleþ him as in þis caas /  
 Sche loueþ so þis heende Nicholas [leaf 45, back]  
 That' absolon may blowe þe bukkes horn  
 he ne had for al his labour but' a skorn 3388  
 And þus sche makeþ absolon hir ape  
 And al his earnest' torneþ to a Iape  
**F**ul soþ is þis prouerbe it' is no lye  
 Men seyn right' þus alway þe ney slye 3392  
 Makeþ þe ferre leef' to be loþ  
 For þough þat' absolon be wood or wroth  
 By cause þat' he fer was from here sight'  
 This Nicholas hap stonden in his light 3396  
 Now bere þe wel þou heende Nicholas  
 For absolon may wayle and synge allas

¶ And so bifell it on a Satyrday  
 This Carpenter was gon to Osenay 3400  
 And heende Nicholas and alisoun  
 Acordid ben to þis conclusioun  
 That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wyle  
 This sely Ielous housbond to begyle / 3404  
 And if so were þis game wente aright  
 Sche schulde slepe in his arm al night  
 For þis was hire desir and his also  
 And right anoon wipouten wordes mo 3408  
 This Nicholas no lenger wold he tarye  
 But dop ful softe in to his Chambur carye  
 Boþe mete and drynke for a day or tweye  
 And to hir housbond bad hir for to seye 3412  
 If þat he axed after Nicholas  
 Sche schulde seye sche wiste nat wher he was  
 Of al þat day sche saw him nat with eye  
 Sche trowed he were falle in som maladye 3416  
 For no cry þat hir mayden cowde him calle  
 he nolde answeere for nought þat may bifalle  
**T**his passeþ forþ al þat ilke satyrday  
 Tha Nicholas in his chambre lay 3420  
 And eet and drank and dede what/ him leste  
 Til soneday þe sonne was gon to reste  
 This sely carpenter haþ gret meruaile [leaf 40]  
 Of Nicholas or what þing may him ayle 3424  
 And seyde I am a-drad by seynt Thomas  
 It stondeþ nat aright wip Nicholas  
 God schilde þat he deyde sodeinly  
 This world is now ful tykel sikerly 3428  
 I saugh to-day a corps y-born to chirche  
 That now on monday last I saugh him wirche  
 Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anoon  
 Clepe at his dore and knokke wip a stoon 3432  
 Loke how it is and telle me boldely  
 This knaue goþ him vp ful sturdily

And at þe chambir dore whil he stood  
 he cryed and knockked as þat he were wood 3436  
 what how what do 3e mayster nicholay  
 how may 3e slepen al þis longe day  
 But al for nought he herde nat o word  
 An hole he fond right lowe vpon a boord 3440  
 Ther as þe cat was wont in for to creepe /  
 And at þat hole he loked in ful deepe /  
 And atte laste he hadde of him a sight  
 This nicholas sat euer gapyng vpright 3444  
 As he had loked on þe newe moone  
 Adoun he goþ and tolde his mayster soone  
 In what aray he sawh þis ilke man  
 This carpenter to blessen him bygan 3448  
 And seyde now help vs seynte Frideswyde  
 A man woot litel what him schal betyde  
 This man is falle with his astronomye  
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye 3452  
 I thought ay wel how þat it schulde be  
 Men schulde nought knowe of goddes pryuyte  
 ¶ 3e blessed be alwey a lewed man  
 That nat but oonly his bileeue can 3456  
 So ferde anoper clerk with astronomye /  
 he walked in the feeldes for to pryde  
 vpon þe sterres what þer schulde bifalle  
 Til he was in a marle pit I-falle / 3460  
 he saugh nat þat but 3et by seint Thomas /  
 Me reweth sore for heende nicholas [leaf 46, back]  
 he schal be ratyd of his studyyng  
 If þat I may by ihū heuen kyng 3464  
 Gete me a staf þat I may vnder spore  
 whil þat þou Robyn heuest vp þe dore  
 he schal out of his studyyng as I gesse  
 And to þe chambir dore he gan him dresse / 3468  
 his knaue was a strong karl for þe noones  
 And by þe hasp he haf it vp at oones

And in þe floor þe dore fil doun anoon  
 This nicholas sat stille as eny stoon 3472  
 And euer he capyd vpward to þe eyr  
 This Carpenter wende he were in despeir  
 And hent him by þe schuldres mightily  
 And schook him harde and cryed spitously 3476  
 what Nicholas what how man loke a doun  
 A-wake and þynk on cristes passioun  
 I crowche þe from Elues and from wightes  
 Ther-with þe night-spel seyde he anon rightes 3480  
 On þe foure halues of þe hous aboute /  
 And of þe þreissfold of þe dore wipoute  
 lord Ihū crist and seynte bendight  
 Blesse þis hous from euery wikkede wight 3484  
 for nyghtes verray þe white pater-noster  
 wher wonestow now, seynte petres soster  
 And atte laste heende Nicholas  
 Gan for to syke sore and seyde alas 3488  
 Schal al þe world be lost eft sones now  
 This Carpenter answerde what seystow /  
 what þenk on god as we doon men þat swynke  
 This Nicholas answerde fette me drynke 3492  
 And after wol I speke in pryuyte  
 Of certeyn þing þat toucheþ þe and me  
 I wol telle it non oþer man certayn  
 This Carpenter goþ forth and comp agayn 3496  
 And brought of mighty ale a large quart/  
 whan ech of hem y-dronken had his part  
 This Nicholas his dore gan to schitte  
 And dede þis carpenter doun by him sitte [leaf 47] 3500  
 And seide Iohan myn host ful leue and deere  
 Thou schalt vpon þy troupe swere me heere /  
 That to no wight þou schalt þis counsel wreye  
 For it is cristes counsel þat I seye 3504  
 And if þou telle it man þou art forlore  
 For þis vengauce þou schalt han þerfore

That if þou wreye me þou schalt be wood  
 Nay crist forbede it for his holy blood 3508  
 Quod þo þis sely man I am no labbe  
 Though I it say I am nought leef to gabbe /  
 Say what þou wolt I schal it neuer telle /  
 To child ne wyf by him þat harwed helle 3512  
**N**ow Iohan quod nicholas I wol not lye  
 I haue I-founde in myn astrologye  
 As I haue loked in þe moone bright  
 That now on monday next at quarter night 3516  
 Schal falle a reyn and þat so wilde and wood  
 That half so gret was neuer Noes flood  
 This worlde he seyde more þan an hour  
 Schal ben I-dreynt so hidous is þe schour 3520  
 Thus schal mankynde drenche and leese his lyf  
 This Carpenter answered allas my wyf  
 And shal she drenche allas myn alisoun  
 For sorwe of þis he fel almost adoun 3524  
 And seyde is þer no remedy in þis caas  
 whe 3is for gode quod heende Nicholas  
 If þou wolt werken aftir lore and reed  
 Thou maist nought worke after þin owen heed 3528  
 For þus seiþ Salomon þat was ful trewe  
 werke by counseil / and þou schalt nat rewe  
 And if þou worken wolt by good counsail  
 I vndertake wipouten mast and sail 3532  
 3et schal I sauen hir and þe and me  
 hastow nat herd / how saued was Noe  
 whan þat our lord had warned him biforn  
 That al þe world wip watir schulde be lorn 3536  
 3is quod þis Carpenter ful 3ore ago  
 hastow nought herd quod Nicholas also [leaf 47, back]  
 The sorwe of Noe wip his felaschipe  
 That he hadde or he gat his wyf to schipe 3540  
 him hadde wel leuer I dar wel vndertake /  
 At pilke tyme þan alle his weperes blake

That sche hadde a schip hir self allone  
 And þerfore wostow what is best to doone / 3544  
 This axep hast and of an hasty þing  
 Men may nought preche or make taryyng  
 Anon go gete vs fast in to þis In  
 A knedyng trowh or elles a kemelyn 3548  
 For ech of vs but loke þat þey be large  
 In which þat we may rowe as in a barge  
 And haue þer In vitaille suffisant  
 But for o day, fy on þe remenant 3552  
 The water schal aslake and gon away  
 Aboute prime vppon þe nexte day  
 But Robyn may not wite of þis þy knaue  
 Ne ek þy mayde Gille I may not saue 3556  
 Aske nought why for þough þou aske me  
 I wol nat tellen goddes pryuate  
 Sufficeth þe but if þat þy witt/ madde  
 To haue as gret a grace as noe hadde / 3560  
 Thy wyf schal I wel sauē out of doute /  
 Go now þy wey and speed þe heer aboute  
 And whan þou hast for hir and þe and me /  
 I-goten vs þis knedyng tubbes þre 3564  
 Than schalt þou hange hem in þe roof ful hie  
 That no man of oure purueaunce aspye  
 And whan þou þus hast doon as I haue seyde  
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem I-leyde 3568  
 And eek an ax to smyte þe corde a-two  
 whan þat þe water comep þat we may goo  
 And breke an hole an hye vpon þe gable  
 In to þe gardynward ouer þe stable / 3572  
 That we may frely passen forþ oure way  
 whan þat þe grete schour is gon away  
 Than schaltow swymme as mery I vndertake  
 As doth þe white doke aftir hir drake [leaf 48] 3576  
 Than wol I clepe how alisoun how Ion.  
 [Beoth merye for the flood passeþ a-non] [in a later hand]

And þou wolt' seye heyl maister nicholay  
 Good morn I see þe wel for it is day 3580  
 And þan schul we be lordes al oure lyf'  
 Of al þe world as noe and his wyf'  
 But' of oo þing' I warne þe ful right'  
 Be wel auysed of þat' ilke nyght 3584  
 That' we ben entred in to schippes boord  
 That' not' of vs ne speke not' a word  
 Ne clepe ne crye but' be in his preyere  
 For it is goddes owne heste deere 3588  
 Thy wyf' and þou most' hangen fer a-twynne  
 For þat' bitwixe 3ou schal be no synne  
 No more in lokyng' þan þer schal in dede /  
 This ordynaunce is seyde, so god me speede / 3592  
 To morwe at' night' whan men ben a slepe /  
 In to our knedyng' tubbes wol we crepe /  
 And sitte þer abydyng' goddes grace /  
 Go now þy way I haue no lenger space 3596  
 To make of þis no lenger sermonyng'  
 Men seyn þus / send þe wyse and sey no þing'  
 Thou art' so wys it' needeth nat' þe teche  
 Go saue oure lyf' and þat' I þe byseche / 3600  
**T**his seely carpenter goþ forþ his way  
 Ful ofte he seyde alas and weylaway  
 And to his wyf' he told his pryete  
 And sche was war and knew it' bet' þan he / 3604  
 what' al this wente cast' was for to seye /  
 But' napeles sche ferd as sche schuld deye  
 And seyde alas go forth þy way anoon  
 help vs to skape or we be ded echon 3608  
 I am þy verray trewe wedded wyf'  
 Go deere spouse and help to saue oure lyf'  
 lo which a gret' þing' is affeccioun  
 A man may dye for ymaginacoun 3612  
 So deepe may impressioun be take  
 This seely Carpenter bygynneth quake [leaf 48, back]

him þenkeþ verrayly þat he may se  
 Noes flood come walkyng' as þe see / 3616  
 To drenchen alisoun his hony deere  
 he weepeþ wayleþ he maketh sory cheere  
 he sikeþ with ful many a sory swough  
 And goth and geteth him a knedyng' trough 3620  
 And after þat a tubbe and a kymelyn  
 And pryuely he sent hem to his In  
 And heng' hem in þe roof in pryute  
 His owne hond þan made laddres þre 3624  
 To clymben by þe ronges and þe stalkes  
 vnto þe tubbes hangyng' in þe balkes  
 And hem vitayled boþe trough and tubbe  
 with breed and cheese wiþ good ale in a Iubbe 3628  
 Suffisyng' right ynough as for a day  
 But or þat he had maad al þis array  
 he sent his knaue and eek his wenche also  
 vpon his neede to londoun for to go 3632  
 And on þe monday whan it drew to nyght  
 he schette his dore wiþouten candel light  
 And dressed al þis þing' as it schuld be  
 And schortly vp þey clumben alle þre 3636  
 They seten stille wel a forlong' way  
 Now pater noster clum quod Nicholay  
 And Clum quod Ion and Clum . quod. Alisoun  
 This Carpenter seyde his deuocioun 3640  
 And stille he sitt' and byddeþ his prayere  
 Ay waytyng' on þe Reyn if he it heere  
 The deede sleep for verray busynesse  
 Fil on þis Carpenter right as I gesse / 3644  
 Abowten courfew tyme or litel more  
 For trauail of his goost he groneþ sore  
 And eft he routeþ for his heed myslay  
 Doun of þe laddir stalkeþ Nicholay 3648  
 And alisoun ful softe a doun hir spedde  
 wiþouten wordes mo þey goon to bedde



Ther as þe Carpenter was wont to lye  
 Ther was þe Reuel and þe melodye [leaf 40] 3652  
 And þus lith alisoun and Nicholas  
 In busynesse of myrþe and of solas  
 Til þat þe belles of laudes gan to rynge  
 And freres in þe Chauncel gan to synge 3656  
**T**his parissch clerk þis amerous absolon  
 That is for loue so harde and woo bygon  
 vpon þe Monday was at Osenay  
 with company him to desporte and play 3660  
 And axed vpon caas a cloysterer  
 Ful pryuely after þe carpenter  
 And he drough him a part out of þe chirche  
 And sayde nay I say him nat here wirche 3664  
 Syn satirday I trow þat he be went  
 For tymber þer our abbot hath him sent/  
 For he is wont for tymber for to goo  
 And dwellen at þe graunge a day or tuo 3668  
 Or elles he is at his hous certayn  
 wher þat he be I can nat soþly sayn  
**T**his absolon ful ioly was and light  
 And thoughte now is tyme wake al night 3672  
 For sikerly I sawh him nought styryng  
 Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spryng  
 So mote I pryue I schal at Cokkes crowe  
 Ful pryuely go knocke at his wyndowe 3676  
 That stant ful lowe vpon his bowres wal  
 To alisoun þan wol I tellen al  
 My loue-longyng for ȝet I schal not mysse  
 That atte leste wey I schal hir kisse 3680  
 Som maner comfort schal I haue par fay  
 My mouth hap icched al þis longe day  
 That is a signe of kysyng atte leste  
 Al nyght I mette eek I was at a feste 3684  
 Ther fore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye  
 And al þe night þan wol I wake and pleye

whan þat þe firste cok' hap crowe anoon  
 vp ryst' þis Iolyf' louer absolon 3688  
 And him arrayeþ gay at' poynt' deuys  
 But' first' he cheweþ greyn and lycoris [leaf 49, back]  
 To smellen swete or he hadde kempt' his heere  
 vnder his tunge a trewe loue he beere / 3692  
 For þer by wende he to be gracious  
 he romeþ to þe carpenteres hous  
 And stille he stant' vnd þe schot' wyndowe /  
 vnto his brest' it' raught/ it' was so lowe / 3696  
 And softe he cowhip with a semy soun  
 what' do 3e hony comb swete alisoun  
 My fayre bryd my swete Cynamome  
 Awake lemman myn and spekeþ tome 3700  
 wel litel þynke 3e vpon my wo  
 That' for 3oure loue I swelte þer I go  
 No wonder is if' þat' I swelte and swete /  
 I morne as dop a lamb after þe tete 3704  
 I-wis lemman I haue such loue-longyng'  
 That' like a turtill trewe is my moornyng'  
 I may not' ete no more þan a mayde /  
 ¶ Go fro þe wyndow Iakke fool sche sayde / 3708  
 As help me god it wol not' be com paine  
 I loue anoþer and elles were I to blame  
 wel bet' þan þe by Ihū absolon  
 Go forþ þy wey or I wol cast' a stoon 3712  
 And let me slepe a twenty deulway  
 Allas quod absolon and weylaway  
 That' trewe loue was euer so ylle bysett/  
 þanne kisseth me syn it may be no bett' 3716  
 For Iesus loue and for þe loue of' me  
 wilt' þou þan go þy wey þer with quod sche  
 3e certes lemman quod þis absolon  
 Than mak' þe redy quod sche I come anon 3720  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 This absolon doun sette him on his knees

And seide I am a lord at alle degrees 3724  
 For after þis I hope þer comeþ more  
 Lemman þy grace / and swete bryd þyn ore  
 The wyndow sche vndyd and þat in hast  
 haue doon quod sche com of and speed þe fast 3728  
 lest þat our neygheboures þe aspye  
 This absolon gan wipe his mouþ ful drye [leaf 50]  
 Derk was þe night as picche or as a cole /  
 Out atte wyndow putte sche hir hole / 3732  
 And absolon him fel no bet ne wers  
 But wip his mouth he kist hir naked ers  
 Ful saurly, whan he was war of þis  
 Abak he sterte and þought it was amys 3736  
 For wel he wist a womman hap no berd  
 he felt a þing al rough and long I-herd  
 And seyde fy alas what haue I do  
 Tehee quod sche / and clapt þe wyndow to 3740  
 And absolon goþ forþ a sory paas  
 A berd a berd / quod heende Nicholas  
 By goddes corps þis game goþ fair and wel  
 This seely absolon herd euery del 3744  
 And on his lippe he gan for angir byte  
 And to himself he seyde I schal þe quyte  
**W**ho rubbiþ now who froteth now his lippes 3747  
 wip dust wip sand wip straw wip cloth wip chippes  
 But absolon þat seith fulofte alas  
 My soule bytake I vnto Sathanas .  
 But me were leuer þan alle þis toun quod he  
 Of þis dispit awroken for to be 3752  
 Allas quod he alas I nadde bleynt  
 his hote loue was cold and al I-queynt  
 For fro þat tyme þat he had kist hire ers  
 Of paramours ne sette he nat a kers 3756  
 For he was helyd of his maledye  
 Fulofte paramours he gan deffye  
 And wept as dop a child þat is I-bete  
 A softe paas went he ouer þe strete / 3760

Vnto a smyth men clepith daun Gerueys  
 That in his forge smythed plowh harneys  
 He scharpeth schar and cultre bysily  
 This absolon knockep al esily 3764  
 And seyde vnto Geruays and þat anoon  
 what who art thou? it am I Absolon  
 what Absolon what <sup>1</sup>cristes swete tree [<sup>1</sup> a later for is put here]  
 why ryse 3e so rathe benedicite [leaf 50, back] 3768  
 what eyleþ 3ou some gay gurl god it woot  
 hap brought 3ou þus vpon þe verytrot  
 By seinte noet / 3e wot wel what I mene  
 This absolon ne roughte nat a bene 3772  
 Of al þis pley no word agayn he 3af  
 For he hadde more tow on his distaf  
 Than Gerueys knew and seyde freend so deere  
 That hote cultre in þe Chymney heere 3776  
 As lene it me I haue þer wip to doone  
 I wol it bring agayn to þe ful soone  
 Gerueys answerde / certes were it gold  
 Or in a poke nobles al vntold 3780  
 3e schul him haue as I am trewe smyth  
 Ey cristes fo<sup>1</sup> what wil 3e do þer wip [<sup>1</sup> a later to is added]  
 Ther of quod absolon be as be may  
 I schal wel telle it þe to morwe day 3784  
 And caughte þe cultre by þe colde stele  
 Ful soft out at þe dore he gan it stele /  
 And wente vnto þe carpenteres wal  
 he cowheþ first and knockep þer wip al 3788  
 vpon the wyndow right as he dede er  
 This alisoun answerde who is ther  
 That knockest so? I warant it a þeef  
 why nay quod he god woot my sweete leef 3792  
 I am þyn absolon, O my derlyng  
 Of gold quod he I haue þe brought a ryng  
 My mooder 3af it me so god me saue  
 Ful fyn it is and þerto wel I-graue 3796

This wol I ȝiue þe / if þou me kisse  
 This Nicholas was rise for to pysse  
 And þought he wold amenden al þe Iape  
 he schulde kisse his ers or þat he skape 3800  
 And vp þe wyndow dyde he hastily  
 And out his ers putteþ he pryuely  
 Ouer þe buttok to haunche bon  
 And þer wiþ spak þis clerk þis absolon 3804  
 Spek sweete bryd I wot nat wher þou art /  
 This Nicholas anon let fle a fart [leaf 51]  
 As gret as it had ben a thundir dent  
 And with þat strook he was almost I-blent 3808  
 And he was redy with his yren hoot  
 And Nicholas amyð þe ers he smoot  
 Of goþ þe skyn an hande brede aboute  
 The hote cultre brente so his toute 3812  
 And for þe smert / he wende for to dye  
 As he were wood anon he gan to crye  
 help watir watir / help for goddes herte  
 This Carpenter out of his slumber sterte 3816  
 And herd on crye watir as he were wood  
 He þought alas for now comeþ Noes flood  
 he sit him vp wiþoute wordes mo  
 And wiþ his ax he smot þe corde a-two 3820  
 And doun he goþ he fond nowthir to selle /  
 No bred ne ale til he com to þe selle/  
 Vpon þe floor and þer aswoun he lay  
 vp styrt hir alisoun and Nicholay 3824  
 And cryden out and harrow in þe strete /  
 The neygheours boþe smal and grete /  
 In ronnen for to gauren on þis man  
 That a swowne lay boþe pale and wan 3828  
 For with þe fal he brosten had his arm  
 But stond he muste to his owne harm  
 For whan he spak he was anon born doun  
 with heende Nicholas and alisoun 3832

They tolden euery man þat he was wood  
 he was a gast and feerd of Noes flood  
 Thurgh fantasie þat of his vanite /  
 he hadde I-bought him knedyng tubbes þre / 3836  
 And hadde hem hanged in þe roof aboue /  
 And þat he preyed hem for goddes loue /  
 To sitten in þe roof par compaignye  
 The folk gan lawhen at his fantasie / 3840  
 In to þe roof þey kyken and þey gape  
 And torne al his harm in to a Iape  
 For what so euer þe carpenter answerde  
 Hit was for nought no man his resoun herde [1751, 22] 3844  
 wiþ opis greet he was so sworn a doun  
 That he was holden wood in al þe toun  
 For euery clerk anon right heeld wiþ opir  
 They seyde þe man was wood my leue broþer 3848  
 And euery man gan lawhen at his stryf  
 Thus swyued was þe Carpenteres wyf  
 For al his kepyng and his gelousye  
 And absolon hap kist hir neþir ye 3852  
 And Nicholas is skaldid in his towte  
 This tale is doon and god saue al þe route  
 Here endeth þe Millers tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And bygynneþ þe prologe of þe Reeue

**W**han folk' hadde lawhen of þis nyce caas  
 Of Absolon and heende Nicholas 3856  
 Dyuerse folk' dyuersely þey seyde  
 But' for þe moste part' þey lowh and pleyde /  
 Ne at þis tale I sawh no man him greue  
 But it' were oonly Osewald þe Reeue 3860  
 By cause he was of Carpentrye craft'  
 A litel Ire is in his herte is laft'  
 He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite  
 So theek' quod he ful wel coude I þe quyte 3864  
 with bleryng' of a prowð mylleres ye  
 If' þat' me luste speke of Ribaudye  
**B**ut' yk' am old me list' not' pley for age  
 Gras tyme is doon my foddur is now forage 3868  
 My whyte top writeþ myn olde 3eeres /  
 Myn hert is al so moulyd a; myn heeres /  
 And 3it I fare as dop an open-ers  
 That' ilke fruyt' is euer lenger þe wers 3872  
 Til it be rote in mullok' or in stree  
 we olde men I drede so fare we /  
 Til we be roten can we nat be rype  
 we hoppen alway whil þe world wol pype 3876  
 For in oure wil þer stikeþ euer a nayl  
 To haue an hoor heed and a greene tayl  
 As hath a leek' for þough oure might' be doon  
 Oure wil desireþ folye euer in oon 3880  
 For whan we may nat' do þan wol we speke / [leaf 52]  
 3et' in oure aisschen old is fyr I-reke /  
 Foure gledys haue we which I schal deuyse  
 Auantyng' / lyyng' / angur coueytise 3884  
 This foure sparkys longen vnto eelde /  
 Oure olde lymes mowen be vnweelde /

But wil ne schal nat' fayle vs þat' is soþ  
And 3et' I haue alwey a coltes top 3888

As many a 3eer as it is passed henne  
Syn þat' my tappe of' lyf' bygan to renne /  
For sikirlik' whan I was born anon  
Deth drough þe tappe of' lyf' and leet' it' goon 3892

And now so longe / hap þe tappe I-ronne  
Til þat' almost' al empty is þe tonne  
The stream of' lyf' now droppeth on þe chymbe  
The sely tonge may wel ryng and chimbe<sup>1</sup> 3896

Of' wrecchednes þat' passed is ful 3oore [1 1st chymbe]  
with olde folk' / sauf' dotage is no more

**W**han þat' oure host' had herd oure sermonyng'  
he gan to speke as lordly as a kyng' 3900

And seyde what' amounteþ al þis wit  
what' schul we speke alday of' holy wryt'  
The deuyl made a Reue for to preche  
Or of' a sowter schipman or a leche / 3904

Say forþ þi tale and tarye nat' þe tyme  
Lo heer is Depford / and it' is passed prime  
Lo Grenewich þer many a schrewe is Inne  
It' were al tyme þi tale to bygynne 3908

**N**ow sires quod þis Osewold þe Reue  
I pray 3ow alle // þat' noon of 3ou him greeue  
Though I answeere and somewhat' sette his howue  
For leeful is wiþ force force to showue 3912

This dronken myllere hap I-told vs heer  
how þat' bygiled was a Carpenter  
Parauenture in scorn for I am oon  
And by 3our leue I schal him quyte anoon 3916

Right' in his cherles termes wol I speke /  
I pray to God his nekke mot' tobreke  
he can wel in myn eye see a stalke [leaf 52, back]

But in his owne he can nought' seen a balke 3920

**H**ere endeþ þe prologe of' þe Reue  
[No break in the MS.]



And here bygynneþ his tale

**A** T Trompyngtoun nat' fer fro Cantebrigge  
 Ther goth a brook' and ouer þat a brigge  
 Vpon þe whiche brook' þer stant' a melle  
 And þis is verray soþ þat' I 3ou telle / 3924  
 A meller was þer dwellyng many a day  
 As eny Pecok' he was prowde and gay  
 Pipen he coude and fissh and nettys beete  
 And turne cuppes wrastle wel and scheete 3928  
 Ay by his belt' he bar a long' panade  
 And of a swerd ful trenchaunt' was þe blade  
 A Ioly popper bar he in his pouche  
 Ther was no man for perel durst' him touche / 3932  
 A Scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose  
 Round was his face and camois was his nose  
 As pyled as an ape was his skulle/  
 he was a market' beten at' þe fulle 3936  
 Ther durste no wight' hand vpon him legge  
 That' he ne swor anon he schuld abegge /  
 A þeef' he was for-soþ of corn and mele  
 And þat a sleigh and vsyng' for to stele / 3940  
 his name was hote deynous Symekyn  
 A wyf' he hadde / come of noble kyn  
 The þarsoun of the toun hir fader was  
 with hire he 3af' ful many a panne of bras 3944  
 For þat' Symkyn schuld in his blood allye  
 Sche was I-fostred in a Nonnerye  
 For Symkyn wolde no wyf' as he sayde  
 But' sche were wel I-norissched and a mayde / 3948  
 To sauen his estaat' and 3omanrye  
 And sche was proud and pert/ as is a pye  
 A ful fair sighte was þer on hem two /  
 On haly dayes bifore hir wolde he go 3952

with his typet' ybounde aboute his heed  
 And sche cam aftir in a gyte of' reed  
 And Symkyn hadde hosen of' þe same / [leaf 53]  
 Ther durste no wight' clepe hir but' ma dame / 3956  
 was noon so hardy walkyng' by þe weye  
 That' with hir dorste rage or elles pleye  
 But' if' he wold be slayn of' Symekyn·  
 wiþ panade or with knyft' or boydekyn· 3960  
 For gelous folk' ben perilous eueremo  
 Algate þey wolde here wyues wende so  
 And eek' for sche was somdel smoterlich  
 Sche was as deyne as water in a dich 3964  
 As ful of' hokir and of' bissemare  
 hir thoughte ladyes oughten hir to spare /  
 what' for hir kynreed and hir nortelrye  
 That' sche had lerned in þe Nonnerye 3968  
 A douȝter hadden þey betwix hem two  
 Of' .xx.<sup>th</sup> ȝeer wiþouten eny mo  
 Sauyng' a child that' was of' half' ȝer age  
 In cradil lay and was a proper page / 3972  
 This wenche þikke and wel I-grown was  
 wiþ Camoys nose and eyȝen gray as glas /  
 And buttockes brode and brestes round and hye  
 But' right' fair was hir heer I wol nat' lye / 3976  
 The parsoun of' þe toun for sche was feir  
 In purpos was to maken hir his heir /  
 Boþe of' his catel / and his mesuage /  
 And straunge made it of' hir mariage 3980  
 his purpos was to bystow hir hye  
 In to som worþy blood of' ancetrye  
 For holy chirche good moot' be despendid  
 On holy chirche blood þat' is descendid 3984  
 Therefore he wolde his Ioly blood honoure /  
 Though þat' he schulde holy chirche deuoure  
**G** Ret' soken had þis meller oute of doute  
 with whete and malt' of' al þe lond aboute 3988

And namely þer was a gret Collegge  
 Men clepe it þe Soler haff of Cantebregge  
 Ther was here whete and eek here malt I-grounde /  
 And on a day it happed on a stounde / 3992  
 Syk lay þe mauncyple on a maledye [leaf 53, back]  
 Men wenden wisly þat he schulde dye  
 For which þis meller stal both mele & corn  
 A þousend part more þan byforn 3996  
 For þer biforn he stal but curteysly  
 But now he is a þeeft outrageously  
 For which þe wardeyn chidde and made fare  
 But ther of sette þe meller not a tare 4000  
 he crakked boost and swor it was nat so  
 Thanne weren þere poore scoleres tuo  
 That dwelten in þe halle of which I seye  
 Testyf þey were and lusty for to pleye 4004  
 And oonly for here mirþe and reuelrye<sup>1</sup> [1 the 1 is later]  
 Vppon þe wardeyn bysily þey crye  
 To ȝeue hem leue but a litel stounde /  
 To go to melle and see here corn I-grounde 4008  
 And hardily þey dursten ley here nekke /  
 The meller schuld nat stel hem half a pekke  
 Of corn by sleighte ne by force hem reue  
 And atte last þe wardeyn ȝaf hem leue 4012  
 Iohn hight þat oon and Alayn hight þat oþer  
 Of o toun were þey born þat highte Strothir /  
 Fer in þe north I can nat telle where /  
 This aleyn makeþ redy al his gere 4016  
 And on an hors þe sak he cast anoon  
 Forþ goþ aleyn þe clerk and also Ion  
 wiþ good sword and wiþ bocler by her side  
 Iohn knew þe way þat hem needith no gyde / 4020  
 And at þe mylle þe sak a-doun he layth  
 Alayn spak first al heil Symond in faith  
 how fares þy faire doughter and þy wyf  
 aleyn welcome quod Symond by my lyf 4024

And Iohn also how now what do 3e heere  
 By god quod Iohn, Symond, neede has na peere  
 him falles serue himself pat has na swayn  
 Or elles he is a fon as clerkes sayn 4028  
 Our mancyples as I hope wil be deed  
 Swa werkes ay þe wanges in his heed  
 And therfore I is come and eek aleyn [leaf 54]  
 To grynde oure corn and carie it / ham ageyn 4032  
 I prey 3ou speed vs in al þat 3e may  
 It schal be doon quod Symkyn by my fay  
 what wol 3e do whil þat it is in hande  
 By god right by þe hoper wol I stande 4036  
 Quod Iohn and se how þat þe corn gas Inne  
 3et sawh I neuer by my fader kynne /  
 how þat þe hoper waggis to and fra  
 Aleyn answerde / Iohn and wiltow swa 4040  
 Than wol I be by-neþe by my croun  
 And se how þat þe mele fallys doun  
 In to þe trough þat schal be my desport /  
 For Ion in faith I may be of 3our sort 4044  
 I is as ille a meller as ere 3e  
 This mellere smyleth for here nycete  
 And þought al þis is docn but for a wyle  
 They wenen þat no man may hem bigile 4048  
 But by my þrift 3et schal I blere here ye  
 For al here sleight and al here philosophie /  
 The more queynte knakkes þat þey make /  
 The more wol I stele whan I take / 4052  
 In stede of mele 3et wol I 3eue hem bren  
 The grettest clerkes beþ not wisest men  
 As whilom to þe wolf þus spak þe mare  
 Of al hert art ne counte I nat a tare 4056  
 Out at þe dore he goth ful pryuyly  
 whan þat he saugh his tyme sotlyly  
 he lokep vp and doun til he hath founde  
 The Clerkes hors þer as it stood I-bounde / 4060

Behynde þe mylle vnder a leuesel  
 And to þe hors he goþ him faire and wel  
 He strepeth of þe bridel right anoon  
 And whan þe hors was loos he gan to goon 4064  
 Toward þe fen þere wilde mares renne  
 For wiþ wihe / þurgh þikke and eek þurgh þenne  
 This meller goth agayn and no word seyde  
 But doth his note and wiþ þe clerkes pleyde / 4068  
 Til þat her corn was fair and wel I-grounde [*leaf 54, back*]  
 And whan þe mele was sakked and I-bounde /  
 This Iohn goþ out and fynt his hors a-way  
 And gan to crye harrow and weylaway 4072  
 Oure hors is lost aleyn for goddes banes  
 Step on þy feet cum on man al at anes  
 Aleyn þour wardeyn haþ his parfray lorn  
 This aleyn al forgeteþ mele and corn 4076  
 Al was out of his mynd his housbondrye  
 what wikked way is he gan gan he crye  
 The wyf cam lepyng inward wiþ a ren  
 Sche seyde allas þour hors goþ to þe fen 4080  
 wiþ wylde mares as fast as he may go /  
 vnþank come on his heed þat band him so /  
 And he þat bettir schuld han knyht þe Reyne  
 Allas quod Iohan aleyn / for cristes peyne 4084  
 Legdoun þi swerd and I sal myn alswa /  
 I is ful wight god wat as is a Ra  
 By goddes hart / he sal nat scape vs bathe  
 why nad þou put þe capil in þe lathe 4088  
 Ilhail aleyn by god þou is a fon  
 This sely clerkes speeden hem anoon  
 Toward þe fen boþe aleyn and eek Ion  
 And whan þe myller sawh þat þey were gon 4092  
 he half a busshel of þe flour haþ take  
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake  
 he seyde I trowe þe clerkes ben a ferd  
 3et can a Miller make a clerkes berd 4096

For al his art/ 3e lat' hem go here way  
 lo wher þey goon // 3e lat' þe children play  
 They get' hym nat' so lightly by my crown  
 This seely clerkes ronnen vp and down 4100  
 wiþ keep / keep. stand stand Iossa ware derere  
 Ga wightly þou and I sal keep him heere /  
 But' schortly til þat' it was verray night' /  
 They cowde nat' þough þey did al here might' 4104  
 here capil cacche it ran away so fast' /  
 Til in a dicche þey caught' / him atte last/  
 wery and wete as bestys in þe Reyn [leaf 55]  
 Comth sely Iohn and wiþ him comp' aleyn 4108  
 Allas quod Iohn þat' day þat' I was born  
 Now are we dryue til heping' and to scorn  
 Oure corn is stole men woln vs foles calle /  
 Bathe þe wardeyn and eek' our felaws alle / 4112  
 And namely þe myller weyloway  
 Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goþ by þe way  
 Toward þe mylle and bayard in his hand  
 The myller sittynge by þe fyr he fand 4116  
 For it' was night' and forþer might' þey nought'  
 But' for þe loue of' god þey him bisought'  
 As herberwñ and of' ese as for her peny  
 þe myller sayd agayn if' þer be eny 4120  
 Swich as it' is 3it' schul 3e haue 3our part  
 Myn hous is streyt. / but' 3e han lerned art/  
 3e conne by argumentes make a place  
 A myle brood of' twenty foote of' space / 4124  
 let se now if' þis place may suffyse  
 Or make it' rom wiþ speche as is 3our gyse  
 Now Symond seyde þis Iohn by seynt' Cutliberd  
 Ay is þou mery and þat is fair answerd 4128  
 I haue herd say men suld take of' twa þinges  
 Slik' as he fynt' / or tak' slik' as he bringes  
 But' specially I pray þe host' ful deere  
 Get' vs som mete and drynk' and mak' vs cheere 4132

And we wol paye trewly at þe fulle  
 wiþ empty hand men may na hawkes tulle  
 Lo heer our siluer redy for to spende  
 This meller in to toun his doughter sende 4136  
 For ale and breed and rosted hem a goos  
 And band her hors he schold no more go loos  
 And in his owne chambir hem made a bed  
 with schetys and with chalouns fair I-spred 4140  
 Nat' from his owen bed ten foot' or twelue /  
 his doughter had a bed al by hir selue  
 Right' in þe same chambre by and by  
 Hit mighte be no bet' and cause why / 4144  
 Ther was no rommer herberw in þe place [leaf 55, back]  
 They sowpen and þey speke hem to solace  
 And dronken euer strong' ale atte beste  
 Aboute mydnyght' wente þey to reste 4148  
 wel hap þe myller vernysshed his heed  
 Ful pale he was for dronken and nat reed  
 he 3oxeth and he spekeþ þurgh þe nose /  
 As he were on þe quakke or on þe pose / 4152  
 To bed he goþ and wiþ him goþ his wyf'  
 As eny Iay sche light' was and iolyf'  
 So was his ioly whistel wel y-wet  
 The cradil at hire beddes feet' is set 4156  
 To rokken and to 3iue þe child to souke /  
 And whan þat' dronken was al in þe crouke  
 To bedde went the dou3ter right' anon  
 To bedde goþ aleyn and also Ion 4160  
 Ther nas no more him needed no dwale  
 This meller hap so wysly bibbed ale /  
 That' as an hors he snortith in his sleep  
 Ne of his tayl bihynd took / he no keep 4164  
 his wyf' burdown a ful strong'  
 Men might' her rowtyng' heeren a forlong'  
 The wenche routeþ eek' par companye  
 Aleyn þe clerk' þat herd þis melodye 4168

He pokyd Iohn / and seyde slepistow  
 Herdistow euer slik' a sang' er now  
 Lo slik' a couplyng' is betwix hem alle  
 A wilde fyr vpon þair bodyes falle 4172  
 wha herkned euer swilk' a ferly þing' /  
 3e þei sul haue þe flour of' ille endyng'  
 This lange night' þer tydes me na rest'  
 But' 3et' na fors al sal be for þe best' 4176  
 For Iohn sayd he as euer mot' I pryue  
 If' þat' I may 3one wenche sal I swyue  
 Som esement hap lawe schapen vs  
 For Iohn þer is a lawe þat says þus 4180  
 That if' a man in a poynt be agreued  
 That in anoþer he sal be releued  
 Oure corn is stoln soþly it' is na nay  
 And we haue had an ylle fitt' to day  
 And syn I sal haue nan amendement  
 Agayn my los I wol haue esement /  
 By godde sale it' sal nan oþer be /  
 This Iohn answerd / aleyn auyse þe 4188  
 The Miller is a parlous man he sayde  
 And if' þat' he out' of' his sleep abrayde  
 he mighte do vs boþe a vilonye  
 Aleyn answerd I count it' nat' a flye 4192  
 And vp he roos and by þe wenche crepte  
 This wenche lay vpright' and faste slepte  
 Til he so neih was or sche might aspye  
 That it had ben to late for to crye 4196  
 And schortly for to seye þey weren at oon  
 Now pley aleyn for I wol speke of' Ion  
 ¶ This Iohn lith stille a forlong' whyle or two  
 And to him self' compleyned of' his woo 4200  
 Allas quod he þis is a wikked Iape /  
 Now may I say þat I am but' an ape  
 3et' hap my felaw somwat' for his harm  
 he hap þe myllers doughter in his arm 4204

¶ Qui in vno grauatur  
in alio debet releuari

[leaf 50]



he auntred him and has his needes sped  
 And I lye as a draf<sup>t</sup> sak<sup>t</sup> in my bed  
 And when þis Iape is tald anoper day  
 I sal be held a daf<sup>t</sup> a cokenay 4208  
 vnhardy is vnsely as men saith  
 I wol arise and auntre it in good faip  
 And vp he ros and softly he wente /  
 vnto þe cradil and in his hand it hente 4213  
 And bar it softe vnto his beddis feet  
 Soone after þis þe wyf<sup>t</sup> hir routyng<sup>t</sup> leet /  
 And gan awake and went<sup>t</sup> hir for to pisse  
 And cam agayn and gan hir cradel mysse 4216  
 And groped heer and þer but<sup>t</sup> sche fond noon  
 Allas quod sche / I had almost<sup>t</sup> mys goon  
 I had almost<sup>t</sup> goon to þe clerkes bed  
 Ey bendicite þan had I foule I-spēd 4220  
 And forþ sche goþ til sche þe cradil fand [leaf 56, back]  
 Sche gropith alway forther with hir hand  
 And fand þe bed and þoughte nat<sup>t</sup> but<sup>t</sup> good  
 By cause þat<sup>t</sup> þe cradil by hit<sup>t</sup> stood 4224  
 Nat<sup>t</sup> knowyng<sup>t</sup> wher sche was for it<sup>t</sup> was derk<sup>t</sup>  
 But<sup>t</sup> fair and wel sche creep in to þe clerk<sup>t</sup>  
 And lith ful stille and wolde han caught<sup>t</sup> a sleep  
 wiþinne a while Iohn<sup>n</sup> þe clerk<sup>t</sup> vp leep 4228  
 And on this goode wyf<sup>t</sup> leyþ on ful sore  
 So mery a fytt/ ne hadd sche nat<sup>t</sup> ful zore  
 he prikeþ harde and deepe as he were mad  
 This Ioly lyf<sup>t</sup> han þis tway clerkes had 4232  
 Til þat<sup>t</sup> þe þridde cok<sup>t</sup> bygan to synge  
 Aleyn wax wery in þe dawenyngē  
 For he had swonken al þe longe night/  
 And seyð far wel malyn my sweete wight 4236  
 The day is come I may no lenger byde /  
 But<sup>t</sup> euermo wher so I go or ryde  
 I am þin owen clerk<sup>t</sup> so haue I seel  
 Now deere leman quod sche go far wel 4240

But or þou go o thing I wol þe telle  
 whan þat þou wendist homward by þe melle  
 Right at þe entre of þe dore byhynde  
 Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde 4244  
 That was I-maked of þyn owen mele  
 Which þat I hilp myn owen self to stele  
 And goode lemman god þe saue and kepe  
 And wip þat word almost sche gan to weepe 4248  
**A** leyn vprist and þought er þat it dawe  
 I wol go crepen in by my felawe  
 And fand þe cradil wip his hand anon  
 By god þought he al wrong I haue I-goon 4252  
 My heed is toty of my swynk to nyght  
 That / makes me þat I ga nouzt aright  
 I wot wel by þe cradel I haue mys go  
 heer lith þe myller and his wyf also 4256  
 Forþ he goþ in twenty deuelway  
 vnto þe bed þer as þe Miller lay  
 he wende haue crope by his felaw Ion [leaf 57]  
 And by þe myller in he creep anon 4260  
 And caught him by þe nekke and soft he spak  
 And seyde Ion þou swyneshed awak  
 For cristes sowle and here a noble game  
 For by þat lord þat cleped is seynt Iame 4264  
 As I haue pries in þis schorte night  
 Swyued þe myllers douzter bolt vpright  
 whiles þou hast as a coward ben agast  
 3e false harlot quod þis mellere hast/ 4268  
 A false traitour false clerk quod he  
 Thou schalt be deed by goddes dignite  
 who durste be so bold to disparage  
 My doughter þat is com of hih lynage / 4272  
 And by þe prote-bolle he caught aleyn  
 And he hent him dispitously ageyn  
 And on þe nose he smot him with his fest  
 Doun ran þe bloody streem vpon his brest 4276

And in þe floor wiþ nose and moup to-broke  
 They walweden as pigges in a poke  
 And vpon þay goon and down þey goon anon  
 Til þat þe Millner stumbled at a ston 4280  
 And doun he felle / bakward on his wyf  
 That wyste noþing of þis nyce stryf  
 For sche was falle a sleepe a litel wight  
 wiþ Ion þe Clerk þat waked al þe night 4284  
 And wiþ þe falle right out of slepe sche brayde  
 help holy croys of Bromholme sche sayde  
 In manus tuas lord to þe I calle /  
 Awake Symond þe feend is in þin halle 4288  
 My hert is broken help I am but deed  
 Ther lythe vpon my wombe and on myn heed  
 Help Symkyn for þis false clerkes fight  
 This Iohn stert vp as fast as euer he might 4292  
 And grasped by þe walles to and fro  
 To fynde a staf & sche sturt vp also  
 And knewe þe estres bet þan dede Ion  
 And by þe wal sche took a staf anon 4296  
 And sawh a litel glymeryng of light [leaf 57, back]  
 For at an hool in schon þe moone light  
 And by þat light she saugh hem boþe two  
 But sikirly sche wiste nat who was who 4300  
 But sche saugh a whit þing in hir ye  
 And whan sche gan þis white þing aspye  
 Sche wend þe clerk had wered a volupeer  
 And wiþ a staf sche drough hir neer and neer 4304  
 And wend haue hit þis Aleyn atte fulle  
 And smot þis meller on þe piled sculle  
 And doun he goþ and cryeþ harrow I dye  
 This clerkes beeten him wel and leet him lye 4308  
 And greyth hem wel and take her hors anon  
 And eek/ here mele and hoom anon þey goon  
 And at the Millen dore þey tok here cake  
 Of half a buisschel flour ful wel I-bake 4312

Thus is þe prowde Miller wel I-bete  
 And haþ I-lost þe gryndyng of þe whete /  
 And payed for þe soper euerydel  
 Of aleyn and of Iohn þat beten him wel 4316  
 His wyf is swyued and his doughter als  
 Lo such it is a Miller to be fals  
 And þerto þis prouerbe is seyð ful soþ  
 he þar nat weene wel þat euyl doþ 4320  
 A gylour schal him self bygiled be  
 And god þat sittest in þy mageste  
 Saue al þis compaignie gret and smale / 4323  
 Thus haue I quit þe Miller in his tale / ¶ her' endeþ þe  
 Reeues tale

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

**T**he Cook of londoun whil þe Reeue spak  
 For Ioye he þought / he clawed him on þe bak  
 ha ha quod he / for cristes passioun  
 This meller hap a scharp conclusioun / 4328  
 vpon his argument of herburgage  
 wel seyde Salomon in his langage /  
 Ne bryng nat euery man in to þyn hous  
 For herburgage by night is perilous 4332  
 wel aught a man avised for to be  
 whom þat he brought in to his pryuyte [leaf 58]  
 I pray to god so gyf my body care /  
 3if euer sippe I highte hogge of ware 4336  
 herd I better myller set a werke /  
 he hadde a Iape of malice in þe derke /  
 And þerfore if 3e fouche sauf to heere  
 But god forbede þat we stynten heere / 4340  
 A tale of me þat am a pouer man  
 I wol 3ow telle as wel as I kan  
 A litel Iape þat fel in oure cite  
 Oure host seyde I graunt it the 4344  
 Now telle on Roger & loke it be good  
 For many a pasteý hastow lete blood  
 And many a Iakk of douer hastow sold  
 That hap be twyes hoot and twyes cold 4348  
 Of many a pilgrym hastow cristes curs  
 For þy persly þey faren 3et þe wors  
 That they haue eten wip þe stubbil goos  
 For in þy schoppe is many a flye loos 4352  
 Now goode / gentil Roger by þy name /  
 But 3it I pray þe be nought wroþ for game  
 [. . . . . No gap in the MS.]  
 Thow saist ful soþ quod Roger by my faith 4356

But soth play quad play as þe flemynge saith

[. . . . . *No gap in the MS.*]

Be thou nat wroþ or we departe her

Though þat my tale be of an hostyler 4360

But napeles I wol not telle it 3it/

But or we departe it schal be quyt/

And þer wip al he lowh / and made chere

And seyde his tale as 3e schal after heere 4364

[*No break in the MS.*]

**A** Prentys dwelled whilom in oure Citee,  
 Of a craft of vitailers was he  
 Gaylard he was as goldfynch in þe schawe /  
 Broun as a bery and a propre felawe 4368  
 wip lokkes blak and kempt ful fetously  
 Dauncen he cowde wel and prately  
 That he was cleped Perkyn reuellour  
 he was ful of loue and paramour 4372  
 As is þe hony combe of hony swete  
 wel were þe wenche þat mighte him meete [leaf 58, back]  
 [. . . . .]  
 . . . . . No gap in the MS.] 4376  
**F**Or whan þer eny rydyng was in cheepe /  
 Out of þe schoppe þider wolde he lepe /  
 Tyl he hadde al þat sight I-seyn  
 And daunced wel he nold nat come ageyn 4380  
 And gadred him a meyne of his sort  
 To hoppe and synge and make such disport  
 And þer þey setten steuene for to meete  
 To pleyen atte dys in such a strete 4384  
 For in þe toun ne was þer no prentys  
 That fairer cowde caste a peyre dys  
 Than Perkyn coupe and þerto he was free /  
 Of his dispence in place of pryuyte 4388  
 That fand his mayster wel in his chaffare  
 For often tyme he fond his box ful bare  
 For such a ioly prentys reuelour  
 That haunteþ dys Reuel or paramour 4392  
 his maister schal it in his schoppe aby  
 Al haue he no part of þe mynstralcy  
 For þeste and ryot be conuertyble  
 Al can þey pley on giterne and rubible 4396

Reuel and troupe as in a lowe degre  
 They ben ful wroþ al day as ȝe may see  
 This Ioly Prentys with his mayster bood  
 Til he was oute neyȝ of his prentys hood 4400  
 Al were he snybbyd boþe erly and late  
 And som tyme lad with reuel in to Newgate  
 But atte laste his mayster him bythought  
 vpon a day whan he his papyr sought 4404  
 Of a prouerbe þat siþ þis same word  
 wel bette is roten appul out of hord  
 Than it rote al þe remenaunt/  
 So fareth it by a ryotous seruaunt 4408  
 hit is ful lasse harm to late him pa.  
 Than he schend al þe seruauntes in þe place  
 Therefore his mayster ȝaf him acqueyntaunce  
 And bad him go wiþ sorwe and wiþ meschaunce 4412  
 And þus þe ioly prentys had his leue //  
 Now let hym ryot al þe night or leue.  
 [*Lines 4413, 4414 form the last line of the page in the MS.*]



## APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

## [THE SPURIOUS TALE OF GAMELYN.]

**L** Itheth and lestneþ and herkneþ aright [leaf 50] 1  
 And 3e schul heere a talkyng of a doughty knight  
 Sire Iohn of Boundys was his right name  
 he cowde of/ norture ynough & mochil of game 4  
 Thre sones þe knight þat with his body he wan  
 The eldest was a moche schrewe / and sone he bygan  
 his breþeren loued wel here fader / and of him were agast /  
 The eldest deserued his fadres curs / and had it at þe last / 8  
 The goode kniȝt his fader lyuede so ȝore  
 That deth was comen him to and handled him ful sore  
 The goode knight cared sore . sik þer he lay  
 how his children scholde lyuen after his day 12  
 he hadde ben wyde wher . but non housbond he was  
 Al þe lond þat he had / it was verrey purchas  
 Fayn he wold it were dressed / amonges hem alle  
 That ech of hem had his part / as it might falle / 16  
 Tho sent he in to cuntre after wise knightes  
 To helpe delen his londes / and dressen hem to rightes  
 he sent hem word by lettres / þey schulden hye blyue  
 yf þey wolde speke with him whil he was on lyue / 20

¶ Tho þe knyghtes herden / sik' þer he lay  
 hadde þey no reste noþer night' ne day  
 Til þey comen to him þer he lay stille /  
 On his dep' bedde . to abyde goddes wille 24  
 þan seyde þe goode knight' syk' þer he lay  
 lordes I 3ou warne for soþ wipoute nay  
 I may no lengere lyuen heer in þis stounde  
 For þurgh goddes wille dep' draweth me to grounde 28  
 Ther nas non of hem alle . þat' herd him aright'  
 þat' þey hadden reuþe of þat' ilke knight'  
 And seyde sir for goddes loue ne dismay 3ou nought  
 God may do bote of bale þat' is now I-wrought 32  
 ¶ Than spak' þe goode knight' sik' þer he lay  
 Boote of bale god may sende I wot' it is no nay  
 But' I byseke 3ou kni3tes for þe loue of me  
 Gop and dresseþ my lond among' my sones þre 36  
 And sires for þe loue of god deleþ hem nat amys  
 And forgetiþ nat' Gamelyn my 3onge sone þat is  
 Takeþ heed to þat on as wel as to þat' oþer [*leaf 59, back*]  
 Selde 3e see ony Eyr helpen his broþer 40  
 ¶ þo leete þey þe knight' lyen þat was nought in hele /  
 And wenten in to counseil his londes for to dele /  
 For to delen hem alle /. to oon þat' was her þought'  
 And for Gamelyn was 3ongest' / he schuld haue nou3t 44  
 Al þe lond þat' þer was þey dalten it in two  
 And leeten Gamelyn þe 3onge wipoute lond go  
 And ech of hem seyde to oþer ful lowde  
 His breþeren might' 3eue him lond whan he good cowde 48  
 whan þey hadde deled þe lond at here wille  
 þey come a3ein to þe knight' þer he lay ful stille  
 And tolden him anon-right' / how þey hadden wrought'  
 And þe knight' þere he lay liked it' right' nought' 52  
 Than seyde þe knight' / by seynt' Martyn  
 For al þat' 3e haue y-doon 3it is the lond myn  
 For goddes loue neyhebours stondeþ alle stille  
 And I wil dele my lond / after my wille 56

Iohan myn eldeste sone / schal haue plowes fyue  
 That was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyue  
 And my myddeleste sone / fyf plowes of lond  
 That I halp for to gete wip my right hond 60  
 And al myn other purchas / of londes and leedes  
 þat I byqueþe gamelyn / and alle my goode steedes  
 And I byseke 3ow goode men þat lawe conne of londe  
 For Gamelynes loue þat my queste stonde 64  
 Thus dalte þe knight his lond by his day  
 Right on his dep bed / sik þer he lay  
 And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille /  
 And deyde whan tyme com / as it was cristes wille 68  
 And anon as he was deed and vnder gras I-graue /  
 Sone þe elder broþer gyled þe 3onge knaue  
 He took in to his hond / his lond as his leede  
 And Gamelyn himselfe / to clothen and to feede 72  
 He clothed him and fed him yuel and eek wroþe  
 And leet his londes forfare and his houses boþe  
 his parkes and his woodes / and dede noþing wel  
 And seþþen he it abought on his faire fel 76  
 So longe was Gamelyn in his broþeres halle [leaf 80]  
 For þe strengest of good wil þey doutiden him alle /  
 þer was non þer Inne nowþer 3ong ne olde  
 That wolde wrappe Gamelyn were he neuer so bolde / 80  
 Gamelyn stood on a day in his broþeres 3erde  
 And bygan wip his hond to handlen his berde  
 he þought on his londes þat layen vnsawe  
 And his faire Okes þat doun were I-drawe 84  
 his parkes were I-broken / and his deer byreeued  
 Of alle his goode steedes noon was him byleued  
 his howses were vnhiel / and ful yuel dight  
 Tho þoughte Gamelyn it wente nought aright 88  
 Afterward cam his broþer walkynge þare  
 And seyde to Gamelyn is our mete 3are /  
 Tho wrapped him gamelyn and swor by goddes book  
 Thou schalt go bake þi self / I wil nouȝt be þy cook 92

how broþer Gamelyn / how answerest þou now /  
 þou spake neuer such a word as þou dost now /  
 By my faith seyde Gamelyn now me þinkeþ neede /  
 Of alle þe harmes þat I haue I tok neuer ar heede 96  
 My parkes ben tobroken and my deer byreued  
 Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileued  
 Al þat my fader me byquaþ al goþ to schame /  
 And þerfor haue þou goddes curs broþer by þy name 100  
 Than byspak his broþer þat rape was of rees /  
 Stond stille gadelyng / and hold right þy pees /  
 Thou schalt be fayn for to haue þy mete and þy wede /  
 what spekest þou Gamelyn of lond oþer of leede 104  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn þe child þat was ying  
 Cristes curs mot he haue þat clepeþ me gadelyng  
 I am no worse gadelyng ne no worse wight  
 But born of a lady and geten of a knight 108  
 Ne durst he nat to Gamelyn ner a foote go  
 But clepide to him his men and seyde to hem þo  
 Goþ and betep þis boy and reueþ him his wyt /  
 And lat him leren an oþer tyme to answeere me bet 112  
 Thanne seyde þe child 3onge Gamelyn  
 Cristes curs mot þou haue broþer art þou myn  
 And if I schal algate be beten anon [leaf 60, back]  
 Cristes curs mot þou haue but þou be þat oon 116  
 And anon his broþer in þag grete hete  
 Made his men to fette staues Gamelyn to bete  
 whan þat euerich of hem / a staf had I-nome  
 Gamelyn was war anon þo he seigh hem come 120  
 þo gamelyn seyh hem come / he loket ouer al  
 And was war of a pestel stood vnder a wal  
 Gamelyn was light of foot / and þider gan he lepe  
 And drof alle his broþeres men right on an hepe 124  
 he loket as a wilde lyoun and leyde on good woon  
 Tho his broþer say þat he bigan to goon  
 he fley vp in til a loft and schette þe dore fast  
 Thus Gamelyn wip þe pestel made hem alle agast 128

APPENDIX TO GROUP A. GAMELYN. Harleian 7334. 133

Some for Gamelynes loue / and some for his eyȝe /  
 Alle þey drowe by halues // þo he gan to pleyȝe /  
 what' how now seyde Gamelyn euel mot' ȝe thee  
 wil ȝe bygynne contek' and so sone flee / 132  
 Gamelyn sought' his broþer / whider he was flowe  
 And saugh wher he loked out' / at a wyndowe /  
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn com a litel ner  
 And I wil teche þe a play atte bokeler 136  
 his broþer him answerde and swor by seynt' Rycher  
 whil þe pestel is in þin hond I wil come no neer  
 Broþer I wil make þy pees / I swere by cristes ore  
 Cast' away þe pestel and wrappe þe nomore / 140  
 I mot' neede sayde Gamelyn wrappe me at' oones  
 For thou wolde make þy men to breke myne boones  
 Ne had I hadde mayn and might' in myn armes  
 To haue I-put' hem fro me he wolde haue do me harmes 144  
 Gamelyn sayde his broþer be þou nought' wroþ  
 For to seen þe haue harm it were me right' loþ  
 I ne dide it nouȝt' broþer but' for a fondyng'  
 For to loken or þou were strong' and art' so ying' 148  
 Com a down þan to me and graunte me my bone  
 Of þing' I wil þe aske / and we schul saughte sone  
 Doun þan cam his broþer þat' fykil was and felle  
 And was swiþe sore agast' of' þe pestelle 152  
 he seyde broþer Gamelyn aske me þy boone [leaf 61]  
 And loke þou me blame but' I graunte sone  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn broþer I-wys  
 And we schulle ben at oon þou most' me graunte þis 156  
 Al þat' my fader me byquath whil he was on lyue /  
 þou most' do me it haue ȝif' we schul nat' stryue /  
 That' schalt' þou haue Gamelyn I swere by cristes ore  
 Al þat' þi fader the byquath þough þou woldest' haue more 160  
 Thy lond þat lyp laye ful wel it schal be sowe  
 And þyn howses reysed vp þat' ben leyd so lowe  
 Thus seyde þ' knight' to Gamelyn wiþ mowthe /  
 And þought' eek' of' falsnes / as he wel coupe / 164

The king' þought' on tresoun / and Gamelyn on noon  
 And went' and kist his broþer / and whan þey were at oon  
 Allas ȝonge Gamelyn noþing' he ne wiste /  
 wiþ which a false tresoun his broþer him kiste / 168  
**L** Ipeth and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝour tonge  
 And ȝe schul heere talkyng' of Gamelyn þe yonge  
 Ther was þer bysiden cryed a wrastlyng'  
 And þerfor þer was sette vp a Ram and a Ryng' 172  
 And Gamelyn was in good wil/ to wende þerto /  
 For to preuen his might' what' he cowþe do  
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn by seynt Richer  
 Thou most' lene me to nyȝt' // a litel Courser 176  
 That' is freisch to the spore on for to ryde  
 I most' on an Erande a litel her byside  
 By god seyð his brother of' steedes in my stalle  
 Go and chese þe þe best' and spare non of' alle 180  
 Of' steedes or of' course þat stonden hem bisyde  
 And tel me goode broþer whider þou wolt ryde  
 ¶ her byside broþer is cryed a wrastlyng'  
 And þerfor schal be set' vp a Ram and a Ryng' 184  
 Moche worschip it were broþer to vs alle  
 Might' I þe Ram and þe Ryng' bryng' home to þis halle  
 A steede þer was sadeled smertely and skeet'  
 Gamelyn did a paire spores fast' on his feet' 188  
 he set' his foot' in styrop / þe steede he bystrood  
 And toward þe wrastelyng' þe ȝonge child rood  
 Tho Gamelyn þe yonge was ride out at þe gate [leaf 61, back]  
 The fals kniȝt his broþer lokked it after þate 192  
 And bysoughte ihū crist' þat' is heuen kyng'  
 he mighte breke his nekke in þat' wrastlyng'  
 As sone as Gamelyn com þer þe place was /  
 he lighte down of' his steede and stood on þe gras / 196  
 And þer he herd a Frankeleyn wayloway syng'  
 And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng'  
 Goode man seyde Gamelyn why makestow þis fare  
 Is þer no man þat' may ȝou helpe out of' þis care 200

Allas seyde þis Frankeleyn þat' euer was I bore  
 For tweye stalworþe sonas / I wene þat I haue lore  
 A Champioun is in þe place / þat' hap I-wrought me sorwe  
 For he hap slayn my two sonas / but' if' god hem borwe / 204  
 I wold ȝeue ten pound by ihū crist' and more  
 wiþ þe nones I fand a man to handil him sore  
 Goode man seyde Gamelyn wilt' þou wel doon  
 hold myn hors whil my man draweþ of' my schoon · 208  
 And help my man to kepe my cloþes and my steede /  
 And I wil in to place go / to loke if' I may speede /  
 By god sayde þe Frankeleyn anon it schal be doon  
 I wil my self' be þy man / and drawn of' þy schoon 212  
 And wende þou in to þe place / ihū crist' þe speede /  
 And drede not' of' þy cloþes nor of' þy goode steede /  
**B**Arfoot' and vngert' . Gamelyn in cam  
 Alle þat' weren in þe place heede of' him þey nam 216  
 how he durst' aunte him of' him to doon his might'  
 That' was so doughty champioun in wrastlyng' and in fight'  
 vp sterte þe Champioun raply and anoon  
 Toward ȝonge Gamelyn / he bigan to goon 220  
 And sayde who is þy fader and who is þy sire  
 For soþe þou art' a gret' fool þat' þou come hire  
 Gamelyn answerde þe champioun tho  
 þou knewe wel my fader / whil he couþe go 224  
 whiles he was on lyue / by seint' martyn  
 Sir Iohn of Boundys was his name and I gamelyn  
 Felaw seyde þe champioun al so mot I þryue  
 I knew wel þy fader whil he was on lyue 228  
 And þiself' Gamelyn I wil þat' þou it' heere [leaf 62]  
 whil þou were a ȝong' boy a moche schrewe þou were  
 þan seyde Gamelyn and swor by cristes ore  
 Now I am older woxe þou schalt' me fynd a more 232  
 By god sayde þe Champioun welcome mote þou be  
 Come þou ones in myn hond schalt' þou neuer þe  
 It' was wel wiþinne þe night' and þe moone schon  
 whan Gamelyn and þe Champioun to-gider gon to goon 236

The champioun caste tornes to Gamelyn þat was prest  
 And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him doon his best  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe Champioun  
 Thou art fast aboute to brynge me a doun 240  
 Now I haue I-proued many tornes of þyne  
 Thow most he seyde prouen on or tuo of myne  
 Gamelyn to þe Champioun ȝede smartly anon  
 Of alle þe tornes þat he cowþe he schewed him but oon 244  
 And kast him on þe left syde þat þre ribbes tobrak  
 And þerto his oon arm þat ȝaf a gret crak  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon  
 Schal it be holde for a cast or elles for noon . 248  
 By god seyð þe Champioun wheþer þat it bee  
 he þat comes ones in þin hand schal he neuer þee  
 Than seyde þe Frankeleyn / þat had his sones þere  
 Blessed be þou gamelyn þat euer þou bore were 252  
 The Frankleyn seyð to þe Champioun of him stood him noon  
 This is yonge Gamelyn þat taughte þe þis pleye [eye  
 Aȝein answerd the Champioun þat liked no þing weþ  
 he is a liþer mayster and his pley is rizt feþ 256  
 Siþ I wrastled first / it is I-go ful ȝore  
 But I was neuere my lyf handled so sore  
 Gamelyn stood in þe place allone wiþoute serk  
 And seyð if þer be eny mo lat hem come to werk 260  
 The Champioun þat peyned him to werke so sore  
 It semeþ by his continuaunce þat he wil nomore  
 Gamelyn in þe place / stood as stille as stoon  
 For to abyde wrastelyng but þer com noon 264  
 Ther was noon with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more /  
 For he handled þe Champioun so wonderly sore /  
 Two gentil men þer were þat yemede þe place [leaf 62, back]  
 Comen to Gamelyn god ȝeue him goode grace 268  
 And sayde to him do on / þyn hosen and þy schoon  
 For soþe at þis tyme þis feire is I-doon  
 And þan seyde Gamelyn so mot I wel fare /  
 I haue nought ȝet haluendel sold vp my ware / 272



Tho seyde þe Champioun so brouk' I my sweere  
 he is a fool þat' þer of' beyep / þou sellest' it so deere  
 Tho sayde þe Frankeleyn þat' was in moche care  
 Felaw he seyde / why lakkest' þou his ware / 276  
 By seynt' Iame in Galys þat' many man hap' sought'  
 3et' it is to good cheep þat' þou hast' I-bought'  
 Tho þat' wardeynes were of' þat' wrastlyng'  
 Come and broughte Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng' 280  
 And seyden haue Gamelyn þe Ryng' and þe Ram  
 For þe best' wrasteler þat' euer here cam . .  
 Thus wan Gamelyn þe Ram and þe Ryng'  
 And wente wiþ moche ioye home in þe mornyng' 284  
 His broþer seih wher he cam with þe grete rowte /  
 And bad schitte þe gate and holde him wiþoute  
 The porter of' his lord was ful sore agast'  
 And stert' anon to þe gate and lokked it fast 288  
**N**OW litheþ and lestneþ boþe 3ong' and olde  
 And 3e schul heere gamen of' Gamelyn þe bolde  
 Gamelyn com þerto for to haue comen In .  
 And þanne was it I-schet' faste wiþ a pyn 292  
 Than seyde Gamelyn porter vndo þe yate  
 For many good mannes sone stondeþ þer-ate  
 Than answerd þe porter and swor by goddes berd  
 Thow ne schalt' Gamelyn come in to þis 3erde 296  
 Thow lixt' sayde Gamelyn so browke I my chyn  
 he smot' þe wyket' wiþ his foot' and brak' away þe pyn  
 The porter seyh þo it might' no better be  
 He sette foot' on erþe he bigan to flee 300  
 By my faip seyde Gamelyn þat' trauail is I-lore  
 For I am of' foot' as light as þou þough þou haddest swore  
 Gamelyn ouertook' þe porter and his teene wrak'  
 And gert' him in þe nekke þat' þe bon tobrak' 304  
 And took' him by þat' oon arm and þrew him in a welle [17. 63]  
 Seuen fadmen it was deep . as I haue herd telle /  
 whan Gamelyn þe yonge þus hadde pleyd his play  
 Alle þat' in þe 3erde were drewen hem a way 308

þey dredden him ful sore for werkes þat he wrouȝte  
 And for þe faire company þat he þider broughte  
 Gamelyn ȝede to þe gate / and leet it vp wyde  
 he leet in alle maner men þat gon in wold or ryde 312  
 And seyde ȝe be welcome wiþouten eny greeue /  
 For we wiln be maistres heer / and aske no man leue /  
 ȝestirday I lefte / seyde ȝonge Gamelyn ·  
 In my broþer Seller .v. tonne of wyn 316  
 I wil not þat þis compaignye parten a-twynne /  
 And ȝe wil doon after me while eny sope is þrynnē  
 And if my broþer grucche or make foul cheere 319  
 Oper for spense of mete or drynk þat we spenden heere /  
 I am oure catour / and here oure aller purs /  
 he schal haue for his grucchyng seint maries curs  
 My broþer is a nyggoun / I swer by cristes ore  
 And we wil spende largely þat he haþ spared ȝore / 324  
 And who þat makeþ grucchyng / þat we here dwelle  
 he schal to þe porter in to þe draw-welle  
 vij. dayes and .vij. nyght Gamelyn held his feste  
 with moche myrþ and solas / þat was þer and no cheste / 328  
 In a litel toret his brother lay I-steke  
 And sey hem wasten his good but durst he not speke  
 Erly on a mornyng on þe viij. day  
 The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way 332  
 Lordes seyde Gamelyn / wil ȝe so hye  
 Al þe wyn is not ȝet y-dronke so brouk I myn ye  
 Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo  
 whan his gestes took her leue from him for to go 336  
 he wold þey had lenger abide / and þey seyde nay  
 But bitaughte Gamelyn god and good day  
 Thus made Gamelyn his fest / and brought it wel to ende  
 And after his gestys took leue to wende 340  
**L** Itheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ ȝoure tonge  
 And ȝe schul heere gamen of Gamelyn þe ȝonge /  
 herkneþ lordynges and lesteneþ aright [leaf 63, back]  
 whan alle gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight 344

Al þe whil þat Gamelyn heeld his mangerye  
 his broþer þought on him be wreke / wiþ his treccherie  
 Tho Gamelyns gestes were riden and I-goon  
 Gamelyn stood allone frendes had he noon 348  
 Tho after ful soone wiþinne a litel stounde  
 Gamelyn was I-take and ful hard I-bounde  
 Forþ com þe fals knight out of þe selleer  
 To Gamelyn his broþer he ȝede ful neer 352  
 And sayde to Gamelyn who made þe so bold  
 For to stroye my stoor of myn houshold  
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn wrappe þe right nouȝt  
 For it is many day I-gon sippen it was bouȝt 356  
 For broþer þou hast I-had by seynt richer  
 Of xv. plowes of lond þis .xvj. ȝer  
 And of alle þe beestes þou hast forþ bred  
 That my fader me biquath on his deth bed 360  
 Of al þis xvj. ȝeer I ȝeue þe þe prow  
 For þe mete and þe drynk þat we haue spended now /  
 Thanne seyde þe fals knyȝt euel mot he the  
 Herkne broþer Gamelyn what I wol ȝeue þe 364  
 For of my body broþer geten heir haue I noon  
 I wil make þe myn heir I swere by seint Iohn  
 Par ma foy sayd Gamelyn and if it so be  
 And þou þenke as þou seyst god ȝelde it þe 368  
 No þing wiste Gamelyn of his broþeres gyle  
 Therefore he him bigyled in a litel while  
 Gamelyn seyde he o thing / I þe telle  
 Tho þou þrewe my porter in þe draw-welle 372  
 I swor in þat wrappe and in þat grete moot  
 That þou schuldest be bounde boþe hand and foot  
 Therefore I þe biseche brother Gamelyn  
 Lat me nouȝt be forsworn broþer art þou myn 376  
 lat me bynde þe now boþe hand and feet  
 For to holde myn avow as I þe biheet  
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn also mot I þe  
 Thou schalt not be forsworen for þe loue of me 380

Tho made þey Gamelyn to sitte might' he nat' stonde [leaf 64]  
 Til þey had him bounde boþe foot' and honde /  
 The fals knight' his broþer of' Gamelyn was agast'  
 And sent' aftir feteres to feteren him fast' 384  
 His broþer made lesynges on him þer he stood  
 And told hem þat' comen In þat' Gamelyn was wood  
 Gamelyn stood to a post' bounden in þe halle /  
 Tho þat' comen in þer loked on him alle / 388  
 Euer stood Gamelyn euen vpright'  
 But' mete ne drynk' had he non neiper day ne night  
 Than seyde Gamelyn broþer by myn hals  
 Now I haue aspied þou art' a party fals / 392  
 had I wist' þat' tresoun þat' þou haddest' y-founde  
 I wolde haue ȝeue þe strokes or I had be bounde /  
 Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon.  
 Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon 396  
 Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat' stood y-bounde stronge /  
 Adam Spencer me þinkþ I faste to longe  
 Adam Spencer now I byseche þe  
 For þe mochel loue my fader loued þe/ 400  
 yf' þou may come to þe keyes lese me out' of' bond  
 And I wil parte wiþ þe of' my free lond .  
 Thanne seyde adam þat' was þe Spencer  
 I haue serued þy broþer þis xvj. ȝeer 404  
 If I leete þe goon out' of' his bour  
 he wolde say afterward I were a traytour  
 Adam sayde Gamelyn so brouk' I myn hals  
 þou schalt' fynde my broþer atte laste fals 408  
 Therfor broþer adam louse me out' of' bond  
 And I wil parte wiþ þe of' my free lond  
 vp swich a forward seyde adam I-wys  
 I wil do þerto al þat' in me is 412  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn al so mot' I þe  
 I wol hold þe couenaunt' and þou wil me  
 Anon as adames lord to bedde was I-goon  
 Adam took' þe keyes and leet' gamelyn out' anoon 416

He vnlokkeð Gamelyn boþe hand and feet  
 In hope of auancement þat he him byheet  
 Than seyde Gamelyn þanked be goddes sonde [leaf 64, back]  
 Now I am loosed boþe foot and honde / 420  
 had I now eten and dronken aright  
 Ther is noon in þis hous schulde bynde me þis night  
 Adam took Gamelyn as stille as ony stoon  
 And ladde him into spence rapely and anon 424  
 And sette him to soper right in a priue stede  
 he bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede  
 Anon as gamelyn hadde eten wel & fyn  
 And þerto y-dronke wel of þe rede wyn 428  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn what is now þy reed  
 wher I go to my broþer and girde of his heed  
 Gamelyn seyde adam it schal not be so  
 I can teche þe a reed þat is worþ þe two 432  
 I wot wel for soþe þat þis is no nay  
 we schul haue a mangery right on sonday  
 Abbotes and priours many heer schal be  
 And oper men of holy chirche as I telle þe / 436  
 Thow schalt stonde vp by þe post as þou were hond-fast/  
 And I schal leue hem vnloke away þou may hem cast  
 whan þat þey haue eten and waisschen here hondes  
 Thou schalt biseke hem alle to bryng þe out of bondes 440  
 And if þey wille borwe þe þat were good game  
 Then were þou out of prison and I out of blame  
 And if euerich of hem say vnto vs nay  
 I schal do anoper I swere by þis day 444  
 Thou schalt haue a good staf and I wil haue anoper  
 And cristes curs haue þat oon þat faileþ þat oper  
 3e for gode seyde Gamelyn I say it for me  
 If I fayle on my syde yuel mot I þe 448  
 If we schul algate assoile hem of here synne  
 warne me broþer adam whan I schal bygynne  
 Gamelyn seyde adam by seynte charite  
 I wil warne þe byforn whan þat it schal be 452

whan I twynk' on þe loke for to goon  
 And cast' away þe feteres and com to me anoon  
 Adam seide Gamelyn blessed be þy bones  
 That' is a good counseil ȝeuyng' for þe nones 456  
 If þey werne me þanne to brynge me out' of bendes [leaf 65]  
 I wol sette goode strokes right' on here lendes  
 Tho þe sonday was I-come and folk' to þe feste /  
 Faire þey were welcomed boþe lest' and meste 460  
 And euer as þey atte halle/ dore comen In  
 They caste þeir eye on ȝonge Gamelyn  
 The fals knight' his broþer ful of trechery  
 Alle þe gestes þat' þer wer atte mangery 464  
 Of Gamelyn his broþer he tolde hem with mouþe  
 Al þe harm and þe schame þat he telle couþe  
 Tho þey were serued Of messes tuo oþer þre  
 Than seyde Gamelyn how serue ȝe me 468  
 It is nouȝt' wel serued by god þat al made  
 That' I sytte fastyng' and oþer men make glade  
 The fals knight' his broþer þer þat he stood  
 Tolde alle his gestes þat Gamelyn was wood 472  
 And Gamelyn stood stille and answerde nought'  
 But adames wordes he held in his þought' /  
 Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully wiþ alle /  
 To þe grete lordes þat' saten in þe halle 476  
 lordes he seyde for cristes passioun  
 helpeþ brynge Gamelyn out' of prisoun  
 Than seyde an abbot' sorwe on his cheeke  
 he schal haue cristes curs and seynte maries eeke 480  
 That' þe out' of prisoun beggeþ oþer borwe  
 But euer worthe hem wel þat' doþ þe moche sorwe  
 After þat' abbot þan spak' an oþer  
 I wold þin heed were of þough þou were my broþer 484  
 Alle þat' þe borwe / foule mot hem falle  
 Thus þey seyde alle þat' were in þe halle  
 Than seyde a priour yuel mot' he þryue  
 It is moche skape boy þat' þou art' on lyue 488

Ow . seyde Gamelyn so brouk' I my bon  
 Now I haue aspyed þat' freendes haue I non  
 Cursed mot' he worþe boþe fleisch and blood  
 That' euer do Priour or abbot ony good 492  
 Adam þe Spencer took' vp þe cloþ  
 And loked on Gamelyn and say þat' he was wroth  
 Adam on þe pantrye litel he þought' / [leaf 63, back]  
 But' tuo goode staues to half dore he brouzt 496  
 Adam loked on Gamelyn and he was war anoon  
 And cast' away þe feteres and he bigan to goon  
 Tho he com to adam he took' þat' oo staf'  
 And bygan to worche and goode strokes ȝaf' 500  
 Gamelyn cam into þe halle and þe spencer boþe  
 And loked hem aboute as þey had be wroþe  
 Gamelyn sprenged holywater wip an Oken spire ./  
 That' some þat' stoode vpright' fel in þe fire 504  
 Ther was no lewede man þat' in þe halle stood  
 That' wolde do Gamelyn eny þing' but' good  
 But' stood besyde and leet' hem boþe werche  
 For þey hadde no rewþe of' men of' holy cherche 508  
 Abbot' or priour monk' or Chanoun  
 That' Gamelyn ouertok' anon þey ȝeeden doun  
 Ther was non of' hem alle þat' wip his staf' mette  
 That' he made him ouerþrowe and quyt' him his dette 512  
 Gamelyn seyde adam for seynte charite  
 Pay large lyuerey for þe loue of' me  
 And I wil kepe þe dore so euer here I masse /  
 Er þey ben assoyled þere schan noon passe 516  
 Downt' þe nought' seyde Gamelyn whil we ben in feere  
 kep þou wel þe dore / and I wol werche heere  
 Stere þe good adam and lat þer noon flee  
 And we schul telle largely how many þer be 520  
 Gamelyn seyde adam do hem but good  
 þey ben men of' holy chirche / draw of' hem no blood  
 Saue wel þe croune and do hem non harmes  
 But' brek' boþe her legges and sippen here armes 524

Thus Gamelyn and adam wroughte right fast  
 And pleyden wip þe monkes and made hem agast  
 Thider þey come rydyng iolily wip swaynes  
 And hom aȝen þey were I-lad in cartes and in waynes 528  
 Tho þey hadden al y-don þan seyde a gray frere  
 Allas sire abbot what dide we now heere  
 Tho þat comen hider it was a cold reed  
 vs hadde ben better at home wip water and breed 532  
 Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere / [leaf 66]  
 Euer stood his broþer and made foul chere /  
 Gamelyn vp wip his staf þat he wel knew  
 And gert/ him in þe nekke þat he ouerþrew 536  
 Alitel aboue þe girdel þe Riggebon tobarst/  
 And sette him in þe feteres þer he sat arst  
 Sitte þer broþer sayde Gamelyn  
 For to colyn þy blood as I dide myn 540  
 As swiþe as þey hadde / I-wroken hem on here foon  
 They askeden watir and wisschen anoon.  
 what some for here loue and some for awe /  
 Alle þe seruantz serued hem of þe beste lawe / 544  
 The scherreue was þennes but a fyue myle  
 And al was y-told him in a litel while  
 How Gamelyn and adam had doon a sory rees  
 Bounden and I-wounded men aȝein þe kinges pees 548  
 Tho bigan sone strif for to wake /  
 And þe scherref aboute Gamelyn for to take /  
**N**ow lythep and lestnep so god ȝif ȝou goode fyn  
 And ȝe schul heere good game of ȝonge Gamelyn 552  
 Four and twenty ȝonge men þat heelden hem ful bolde  
 Come to þe schirref and seyde þat þey wolde /  
 Gamelyn and adam fetten away  
 The scherref ȝaf hem leue soþ as I ȝou say 556  
 They hyeden faste wold þey nought bylynne /  
 Til þey come to þe ȝate þer Gamelyn was Inne  
 They knocked on þe gate þe porter was ny  
 And loked out at an hol as man þat was sly 560



The porter hadde byholde hem a litel while /  
 he loued wel Gamelyn and was adrad of gyle  
 And leet þe wyket stonden y-steke ful styлле  
 And asked hem wipoute what was here wille 564  
 For al þe grete company þanne spak but oon  
 Vndo þe gate porter and lat vs in goon  
 Than seyde þe porter so brouke I my chyn  
 3e schul sey 3our erand er 3e comen In 568  
 Sey to Gamelyn and adam if here wille be  
 we wil speke wip hem wordes two or þre  
 Felaw seyde þe porter stond þere stille [leaf 68, back]  
 And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille 572  
 In went þe porter to Gamelyn anoon  
 And seyde sir I warne 3ou her ben come 3our foon  
 The scherreues meyne ben atte gate /  
 For to take 3ou boþe schul 3e na skape / 576  
 Porter seyde Gamelyn so moot I wel þe /  
 I wil allowe þe þy wordes whan I my tyme se  
 Go agayn to þe 3ate and dwel wip hem a while  
 And þou schalt se right sone porter a gyle 580  
 Adam sayde Gamelyn looke þe to goon  
 we haue foomen atte gate and frendes neuer oon  
 It ben þe schirrefes men þat hider ben I-come /  
 They ben swore to-gidere þat we schul be nome / 584  
 Gamelyn seyde adam hye þe right blyue /  
 And if I faile þe þis day euel mot I þryue  
 And we schul so welcome þe scherreues men  
 That som of hem schul make here beddes in þe den 588  
 Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went /  
 And a good cart staf in his hand he hente  
 Adam hente sone anoper gret staf  
 For to helpe Gamelyn and goode strokes 3af 592  
 Adam felde tweyne and Gamelyn felde þre  
 The oper setten feet on erþe and bygonne fle  
 what seyde adam so euer here I masse  
 I haue a draught of good wyn / drynk er 3e passe / 596

Nay by god sayde þay / þy drynk' is not' good  
 It wolde make mannes brayn to lien in his hood  
 Gamelyn stood stille and loket him aboute  
 And seih þe scherreue come with a gret' route / 600  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn what' be now þy reedes  
 Here comþ þe scherreue and wil haue oure heedes  
 Adam sayde Gamelyn my reed is now þis  
 Abide we no lenger lest' we fare amys 604  
 I rede þat' we to wode goon ar þat' we be founde  
 Better is vs þer loos þan in town y-bounde /  
 Adam took' by þe hond 3onge Gamelyn  
 And euerich of hem tuo drank' a draught' of wyn · 608  
 And after took' her coursers and wenten her way [leaf 67]  
 Tho fond þe scherreue nest' but non ay  
 The scherreue lighte a-down and went' in to þe halle /  
 And fond þe lord y-fetered faste wiþ alle/ 612  
 The scherreue vnfetered him sone and þat' anoon  
 And sent' after a leche to hele his rigge boon  
**L** Ete we now þis fals knight'. lyen in his care  
 And talke we of Gamelyn and loke how he fare 616  
 Gamelyn in to þe woode stalkede stille  
 And adam þe Spenser liked ful ylle /  
 Adam swor to Gamelyn by seynt' Richer  
 Now I see it' is mery to be a Spencer 620  
 That leuer me were / keyes for to bere /  
 Than walken in þis wilde woode my clothes to tere /  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn dismaye þe right' nought'  
 Many good mannes child in care is I-brought' 624  
 And as þey stooode talkyng' bopen in feere /  
 Adam herd talkyng' of men and neyh him þought' þei were  
 Tho Gamelyn vnder þe woode loket aright'  
 vij. score of 3onge men he saugh wel a dight' 628  
 Alle satte atte mete compas aboute /  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn now haue we no doute  
 After bale comeþ boote þurgh grace of god almight'  
 Me þynkeþ of mete and drynk' þat' I haue a sight' 632

Adam lokede þo vnder woode bowȝ  
And whan he seyh mete he was glad ynough  
For he hopede to god for to haue his deel  
And he was sore alonged after a good meel 636  
As he seyde þat word þe mayster outlawe  
Saugħ Gamelyn and adam vnder woode schawe /  
ȝonge men seyde þe maister by þe goode roode  
I am war of gestes / god send vs non but goode 640  
ȝonder ben tuo ȝonge men wonder wel adight  
And paraenture þer ben mo / who-so loked aright  
Ariseþ vp ȝe ȝonge men and fetteþ hem to me /  
It is good þat we witen what men þey bee / 644  
Vp þer sterten seuene / fro þe dyner  
And metten with Gamelyn and adam Spenser  
whan þey were neyh hem þan seyde þat oon [leaf 87, back]  
ȝeldeth vp ȝonge men ȝour bowes and ȝour floon . 648  
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat yong was of elde  
Moche sorwe mot he haue þat to ȝou hem ȝelde /  
I curse non oþer but right my selue  
þey ȝe fette to ȝow fyue þanne ȝe be twelue / 652  
Tho þey herde by his word þat might was in his arm  
Ther was non of hem alle / þat wolde do him harm .  
But sayd vnto gamelyn myldely and stille  
Com afore our maister and sey to him þy wille 656  
yonge men sayde Gamelyn by ȝour lewte  
what man is ȝour maister þat ȝe wiþ be  
Alle þey answerde wiþoute lesyng  
Oure maister is I-crouned of outlawes kyng 660  
Adam seyde Gamelyn gowe in cristes name /  
he may neyþer mete ne drynk werne vs for schame /  
If þat he be heende and come of gentil blood  
he wol ȝeue vs mete an drynk and doon vs som good 664  
By seynt Iame seyð adam / what harm þat I gete /  
I wil aunte to þe dore þat I hadde mete  
Gamelyn and adam wente forþ in feere  
And þey grette þe maister þat þey founde þere 668

Than seide þe maister kyng<sup>t</sup> of outlawes  
 what<sup>t</sup> seeke 3e 3onge men vnder woode schawes  
 Gamelyn answerde þe kyng<sup>t</sup> wip his croune /  
 he moste needes walke in woode þat<sup>t</sup> may not walke in towne /  
 Sire we walke not<sup>t</sup> heer noon harm for to do 673  
 But<sup>t</sup> if<sup>t</sup> we meete wip a deer to scheete þerto /  
 As men þat<sup>t</sup> ben hungry and mow no mete fynde  
 And ben harde bystad vnder woode lynde 676  
 Of Gamelynes wordes þe maister hadde roupe /  
 And seyde 3e schal haue ynough haue god my troupe /  
 he bad hem sitte þer adoun for to take reste / [? MS. etc]  
 And bad hem <sup>1</sup>ete and drynke and þat<sup>t</sup> of þe beste / 680  
 As þey sete and eeten and drouke wel and fyn .  
 Than seyð þat<sup>t</sup> oon to þat<sup>t</sup> oper / þis is Gamelyn .  
 Tho was þe maister outlawe in to counseil nome  
 And told how it was Gamelyn þat<sup>t</sup> þider was I-come / 684  
 Anon as he herde how it<sup>t</sup> was bifalle [leaf 68]  
 he made him maister vnder him ouer hem alle /  
 wipin þe þridde wyke him com tydyng<sup>t</sup>  
 To þe maister outlawe þat<sup>t</sup> þo was her kyng<sup>t</sup> 688  
 That<sup>t</sup> he schulde come hom his pees was I-made  
 And of þat<sup>t</sup> goode tydyng<sup>t</sup> he was þo ful glad  
 Tho seyde he to his 3onge men soþ for to telle /  
 Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenger dwelle / 692  
 Tho was Gamelyn anon wipoute taryyng<sup>t</sup>  
 Made maister outlawe and crouned her kyng<sup>t</sup>  
 ¶ Tho was Gamelyn crouned kyng<sup>t</sup> of outlawes  
 And walked a while vnder woode schawes 696  
 The fals knight<sup>t</sup> his broþer was scherreu and sire  
 And leet<sup>t</sup> his broþer endite for hate and for Ire /  
 Tho were his bonde-men sory and noþing<sup>t</sup> glade  
 whan Gamelyn her lord wolues-heed was cryed & made 700  
 And sente out<sup>t</sup> of his men wher þey might<sup>t</sup> him fynde  
 For to seke Gamelyn vnder woode lynde /  
 To telle him tydynges how þe wynd was went<sup>t</sup>  
 And al his good reued and his men schent 704

¶ whan þey had him founde on knees þey hem sette /  
 And a-doun wip here hood and here lord grette /  
 Sire wrappe þou nought for þe goode roode /  
 For we haue brought þou tydynges but þey be nat goode 708  
 Now is þy broþer scherreue and hap þe baillye  
 And he hap endited þe and wolues-heed dop þe crie  
 ¶ Allas seyde Gamelyn þat euer I was so slak  
 þat I ne hadde broke his nekke þo his Rigge brak 712  
 God greteþ hem wel myn housbondes and wyf  
 I wol ben atte nexte schire haue god my lyf  
 Gamelyn came wel redy to þe nexte schire/  
 And þer was his broþer boþe lord and sire / 716  
 Gamelyn com boldelych in to þe moot halle  
 And put a doun his hood among þe lordes alle  
 God saue þou alle lordynges þat now here be  
 But Brokebak Scherreue euel mot þou þe / 720  
 why hast þou do me þat schame and vilonye /  
 For to late endite me and woluesheed me crye  
 Tho þought þe fals knight for to ben awreke [leaf 68, back]  
 And leet take Gamelyn most he nomore speke 724  
 Might þer be nomore grace but Gamelyn atte last  
 was cast in to prisoun and fetered ful fast  
 Gamelyn hap a broþer þat highte sir Ote  
 As good a knight and heende as mighte gon on foote 728  
 Anon þer zede a messenger to þat goode knight  
 And told him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight  
 Anon as sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was a dight  
 he was wonder sory was he no þing light 732  
 And leet saddle a steede and þe way he nam  
 And to his tweyne breþeren anon right he cam  
 Sire seyde sire Ote to þe scherreue þo /  
 we ben but thre breþeren schul we neuer be mo 736  
 And þou hast y-prisoned þe best of vs alle /  
 Swich anoþer broþer yuel mot him bifalle  
 Sire Ote seide þe fals knight lat be þi curs /  
 By god for þy wordes he schal fare þe wurs 740

To þe kynges prisoun anon he is y-nome  
 And þer he schal abyde til þe Iustice come /  
 Par de seyde sir Ote better it schal be  
 I bidde him to maympris þat þou graunt him me 744  
 Til þe nexte sitting of delyueraunce  
 And þanne lat Gamelyn stande to his chaunce  
 Broþer in swich a forthward I take him to the /  
 And by þi fader soule þat þe bygat and me 748  
 But if he be redy whan þe Iustice sitte /  
 Thou schalt bere þe Iuggement for al þi grete witte  
 I graunte wel seide sir Ote þat it so be  
 Let delyuer him anon and tak him to me / 752  
 Tho was Gamelyn delyuered to sire Ote his broþer  
 And þat night dwelleden þat on wip þat oþer  
 On þe morn seyde Gamelyn to sir Ote þe heende  
 Broþer he seide I moot / forsothe fro þe wende 756  
 To loke how my 3onge men leden here lyf  
 whether þey lyuen in Ioie or elles in stryf  
 By god seyde sire Ote / þat is a cold reed  
 Now I see þat al þe cark schall fallen on myn heed 760  
 For whan þe Iustice sitte and þou be nought I-founde  
 I schal anon be take and in þy stede I-bounde / [leaf 69]  
 Broþer sayde Gamelyn dismaye þe nought  
 For by seint Iame in gales þat many man hap sought 764  
 If þat god almighty hold my lyf and witt  
 I wil be þer redy whan þe Iustice sitt  
 Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn god schilde þe fro schame  
 Com whan þou seest tyme / and bring vs out of blame / 768  
**L** Itheþ and lestneþ and holdeþ 3ou stille /  
 And 3e schul here how Gamelyn had al his wille /  
 Gamelyn wente a3ein vnder woode Rys  
 And fond þere pleying 3onge men of prys 772  
 Tho was 3onge Gamelyn glad & bliþe ynough  
 whan he fond his mery men vnder woode bough  
 Gamelyn and his men talked in feere /  
 And þey hadde good game here maister to heere 776

They tolden him of auentures þat þey hadde fownde /  
 And Gamelyn hem tolde azein how he was fast I-bounde  
 whil Gamelyn was outlawed had he no cors  
 There was no man þat for him ferde þe wors 780  
 But abbotes and priours monk and Chanoun  
 On hem left he no þing whan he might hem nom  
 whil Gamelyn and his men made merþes ryue  
 The fals knight his broþer yuel mot he þryue / 784  
 For he was fast about boþe day and oþer  
 For to hyre þe quest to hangen his broþer  
 Gamelyn stood on a day and as he biheeld  
 The woodes and þe schawes in þe wilde feeld 788  
 he þought on his broþer how he him beheet  
 That he wolde be redy whan þe Iustice seet  
 he þoughte wel þat he wolde wipoute delay  
 Come afore þe Iustice to kepen his day 792  
 And seide to his ȝonge men dighteþ ȝou ȝare /  
 For whan þe Iustice sitt we moote be þare /  
 For I am vnder borwe til þat I come /  
 And my broþer for me to prisoun schal be nome / 796  
 By seint Iame seyde his ȝonge men and þou rede þerto  
 Ordeyne how it schal be and it schal be do /  
 whil Gamelyn was comyng þer þe Iustice sat/  
 The fals knight his broþer forȝat he nat þat [*leaf 80, back*] 800  
 To huyre þe men on his quest to hangen his broþer  
 Though he hadde nought þat oon he wolde haue þat oþer  
 Tho cam Gamelyn fro vnder woode Rys  
 And broughte wip him / his ȝonge men of prys 804  
 ¶ I se wel seyde Gamelyn þe Iustice is sette  
 Go afor adam and loke how it spette /  
 Adam went in to þe halle and loked al aboute  
 he seyh þere stonde lordes gret and stoute / 808  
 And sir Ote his broþer fetered wel fast  
 þo went adam out of halle as he were agast  
 Adam said to Gamelyn and to his felaws alle  
 Sir Ote stant I-fetered in þe moot halle 812

3onge men seide Gamelyn þis 3e heeren alle  
 Sir Ote stant I-fetered in þe moot halle  
 If God 3if vs grace wel for to doo  
 he schal it abegge þat broughte þertoo 816  
 Thanne sayde adam þat lokkes hadde hore /  
 Cristes curs most he haue þat him bond so sore  
 And þou wilt Gamelyn do after my red  
 Ther is noon in þe halle schal bere a-vey his heed 820  
 Adam seyde Gamelyn we wilne nought don so /  
 we wil slee þe guiltyf and lat þe oþer go  
 I wil in to þe halle /and wiþ þe Iustice speke /  
 On hem þat ben guiltyf I wil ben a-wreke 824  
 lat non skape at þe dore take 3onge men 3eme /  
 For I wil be Iustice þis day domes to deme  
 God spede me þis day at my newe werk  
 Adam com on *with* me / for þou schalt be my clerk 828  
 His men answereden him and bad him doon his best  
 And if þou to vs haue neede þou schalt fynde vs prest  
 we wiln stande with þe whil þat we may dure  
 And but we werke manly pay vs non hure / 832  
 yonge men seyde Gamelyn so mot I wel þe  
 As trusty a maister 3e schal fynde of me /  
 Right þere þe justice sat in þe halle  
 In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle 836  
 ¶ Gamelyn leet/ vnfetere his broþer out of beende  
 Thanne seyde sir Ote his broþer þat was heende [leaf 70]  
 Thou haddest almost Gamelyn dwelled to longe  
 For þe quest is oute on me þat I schulde honge 840  
 Broþer seyde Gamelyn so god 3if me good rest  
 This day þey schuln ben hanged þat ben on þy quest  
 And þe Iustice boþe þat is Iugges man  
 And þe scherrene boþe þurgh him it bigan 844  
 Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise  
 Now is þy power y-don þou most nedes arise  
 Thow hast 3euen domes þat ben yuel dight  
 I wil sitten in þy sete an dressen hem aright 848



The Iustice sat stille and roos nought anoon  
 And Gamelyn cleuede his cheeke boon  
 Gamelyn took him in his arm and no more spak  
 But prew him ouer þe barre and his arm tobrak 852  
 Durste non to Gamelyn seye but good  
 For fered of þe company þat wipoute stood  
 Gamelyn sette him down in þe Iustices sete /  
 And sire Ote his broþer by him / and adam at his feet 856  
 whan Gamelyn was I-set in þe Iustices sete  
 herkneþ of a bourde þat Gamelyn dede /  
 he leet fetre þe Iustice and his fals broþer  
 And dede hem come to þe barre þat oon wip þat oper 860  
 Tho Gamelyn hadde þus y-doon had he no rest  
 Til he had enquired who was on þe quest  
 For to deme his broþer sir Ote for to honge /  
 Er he wiste which þey were he þoughte ful longe 864  
 But as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher þey were  
 he dede hem euerichone fetere in feere /  
 And bringen hem to þe barre and sette hem in rewe /  
 By my faip seyde þe Iustice þe Scherreue is a schrewe 868  
 Than seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise  
 Thou hast y-geue domes of þe wors assise  
 And þe .xij. sisours þat weren of þe queste /  
 They schul ben hanged þis day so haue I reste 872  
 Thanne seide þe scherreu to 3onge Gamelyn  
 Lord I crie þe mercy broþer art þou myn  
 Therefore seyde Gamely haue þou cristes curs  
 For and þou were maister 3it I schulde haue wors [170, 171] 876  
 For to make schort tale and nou3t to tarie longe  
 he ordeyned him a queste of his men so stronge  
 The Iustice and þe scherreu boþe honged hye  
 To weyuen wip ropes and wip þe wynd drye 880  
 And þe .xij. sisours sorwe haue þat rekke  
 Alle þey were hanged faste by þe nekke /  
 Thus ended þe fals knight wip his treccherie  
 That euer had I-lad his lyf in falsnes and folye 884

He was hanged by þe nek' and nouȝt' by þe purs  
 That' was þe meede þat' he had for his fadres curs  
 Sir Ote was eldest' and Gamelyn was ȝing'  
 þey wenten wiþ here freendes euen to þe kyng' 888  
 They made pees wiþ þe kyng' of' þe best' assise  
 The kyng' loued wel sir Ote and made him Iustise  
 And after þe kyng' made Gamelyn boþe in Est' and west  
 Chef' Iustice of' al his fre forest' 892  
 Alle his wighte ȝonge men þe kyng' forȝaf' here gilt'  
 And sitthen in good office þe kyng' hem hath I-pilt'  
 Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede 895  
 And wrak' him of' his enemys and quyt' hem here meede  
 And sire Ote his broþer made him his heir  
 And sippen wedded Gamelyn a wyf' boþe good and feyr  
 They lyueden to-gidere / whil þat crist' wolde  
 And sipen was Gamelyn grauen vnder molde 900  
 And so schal we alle may þer no man fle  
 God bryng' vs to þe Ioye þat' euer schal be / A M E N

*[The rest of the page, eleven lines, is blank in the MS.]*

## GROUP B. (FRAGMENT II.)

### § 1. MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK.

**HARLEIAN MS. 7334** (British Museum).

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**O**wre Hoste sawh þat þe brighte sonne [leaf 71]  
The arke of his artificial day haþ I-ronne  
The fourþe part of half an hour and more /  
And þough he were nat depe in lore 4  
he wist it was þe þrettenþe day  
Of april þat is messenger to may  
And sawe wel þat þe schade of euery tree  
was in þe lengthe þe same quantite 8  
That was þe body erecte þat caused it  
And þerfore by þe schadwe he took his wit  
That Phebus which þat schoon so fair and bright  
Degrees was .xlv. clombe on hight 12  
And for þat day as in þat latitude  
Hit was ten of þe klokke he gan conclude /  
And sodeynly he plight his hors aboute  
**L**Ordynge quod he I warne 3ou al þe route 16  
The fourþe party of þis day is goon  
Now for þe loue of god and of seint Ion  
leseþ no tyme as forþe as 3e may  
lordynges þe tyme passeþ night and day 20  
And stelip fro vs what pryuely slepyng  
And what þurgh negligence in oure wakyng  
As doþ þe streem þat torneþ neuer agayn  
Descendyng fro þe mounteyn in to playn 24  
wel can senek and many philosopher  
Bywaylen tyme more þan gold in cofre  
For losse of catel may recouered be /  
But losse of tyme schendeth vs quod he 28

It wil nat come agayn wipoute drede  
 Nomore þan wol malkyns maydenhede  
 whan sche had lost it in hir wantownesse. /  
 let vs nat mowlen þus in ydelnesse 32

**S** Ir man of lawe quod he so haue 3e blisse  
 Telle vs a tale anon as forward ys  
 3e be submitted þurgh our fre assent /  
 To stonden in þis cas at my Iuggement 36  
 Acquyteþ 3ow and holdeþ 3oure byheste /  
 Than haue 3e doon 3our deuour atte leste

**H** Ost quod he depardeux I assent [leaf 71, back]  
 To breke forward is nat myn entent / 40  
 Byheste is dette and I wol holde fayn  
 Al my byhest I can no better sayn  
 For such lawe as a man 3eueth anoper wight  
 he schuld him selue vsen hit by right 44  
 Thus wol oure text but napeles certeyn  
 I can right now non oper tale seyn  
 That Chaucer þey he can but lewedly  
 On metres and on Rymyng certeynly 48  
 Hap seyð hem in such englisch as he can  
 Of olde tyme as knoweþ many man  
 And 3if he haue nouzt seyð hem leue brother  
 In O bok he hap seyð hem in anoper 52  
 For he hap told of louers vp and down  
 Moo þan Ovide made of mencion  
 In his Epistelles þat ben so olde  
 what schuld I tellen hem syn þey be tolde / 56  
 In 3oupe he made of Coys and alcioun  
 And sippe hap he spoke of euerychon  
 These noble wyfes and þese louers eke  
 who-so wole his large volume seekē 60  
 Cleped þe seintes legendes of Cupide  
 Ther may he see þe large woundes wyde  
 Of lucesse and of Babiloun Tysbee  
 The sorwe of Dido for þe fals Enee 64

The tree of philles for hir demephon  
 The pleynt<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> Dyane and of<sup>t</sup> Ermyon  
 Of<sup>t</sup> Adrian and of<sup>t</sup> ysyphilee  
 The barren yle stondyng<sup>t</sup> in þe see / 68  
 The dreynt<sup>t</sup> leander<sup>t</sup> for hir Erro  
 The teeres of<sup>t</sup> Eleyne and eek<sup>t</sup> þe woo  
 Of<sup>t</sup> bryxseyde and of<sup>t</sup> ledomia  
 The cruelte of<sup>t</sup> þe queen Medea 72  
 The litel children hangyng<sup>t</sup> by þe hals  
 For þilke Iason þat<sup>t</sup> was of<sup>t</sup> loue so fals  
 O ypermystre penollope and alceste /  
 3oure wyfhood he comendeth wip þe beste 76  
 But<sup>t</sup> certeynly no worde writeþ he [leaf 72]  
 Of<sup>t</sup> þilke wikked ensample of<sup>t</sup> Canace  
 That<sup>t</sup> loued hir owen broþer synfully  
 On whiche corsed stories I seye fy 80  
 Or elles of<sup>t</sup> Tyro appoloneus  
 how þat<sup>t</sup> þe cursed kyng<sup>t</sup> Antiochus  
 Byreft<sup>t</sup> his doughter of<sup>t</sup> hir maydenhede  
 That<sup>t</sup> is so horrible a tale as man may reede 84  
 whan he hir þrew vpon þe pament<sup>t</sup>  
 And þerfore he of<sup>t</sup> ful auysement  
 wolde neuer wryte in non of<sup>t</sup> his sermouns  
 Of<sup>t</sup> such vnkynde abhominaciouns 88  
 Ne I wol non rehearse if<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> I may  
 But<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> my tale how schal I do þis day  
 Me were loth to be lykned douteles /  
 To muses þat men clepen Pyerides 92  
 Methamorphoseos wot<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> I mene  
 But<sup>t</sup> napeles I recche nat a bene  
 They I come after him with hawe-bake /  
 I speke in prose<sup>1</sup> and let<sup>t</sup> him rymes make 96  
 And wip þat<sup>t</sup> word he wip a sobre cheere  
 Bygan his tale as 3e schal after heere ¶ Explicit<sup>t</sup> prologus  
 [No break in the MS.]

<sup>1</sup> Was *Melibe* first meant for the Man of Law?

[*The Proem*]

incipit fabula /

**O** Hateful harm condicioñ of pouert' [on leaf 72] 99  
 wip þurst' wip cold wip hunger so confoundyd  
 To asken help it schameþ in þin hert  
 If þou non aske wip neede so art þou woundyd  
 That verray neede vnwrappeþ al þy woundes hyd

Maugre þyn heed þou most' for Indigence  
 Or stele or begge or borwe þy dispence 105

Thow blamest crist and seyst' ful bitterly 106  
 he mys departeþ riches temporal

And þyn neyhebour þou wytes synfully  
 And seyst' þou hast' to litel and he haþ al 109

Parfay seystow som tyme he rekne schal  
 whan þat' his tayl schal brennen in þe gleede  
 For he nought' helpeþ þe needful in his neede 112

**H**Erkneþ what' is þe sentens of þe wyse 113  
 Bet' is to dye þan haue indigence

Thy selue neyghebour wol þe despyse [leaf 72, back]  
 If þou be pore far wel þy reuerence 116

3et' of þe wyse man tak' þis sentence  
 Alle þe dayes of pore men be wikke /  
 Be war þerfore or þou come to þat' prikke / 119

3if þou be pore þy broþer hateþ þe 120  
 And alle þy frendes fleep fro þe allas

O Riche marchauñd3 ful of wele be 3e  
 O noble prudent' folk' as in þis cas 123

3oure bagges beþ nat fuld wip ambes aas  
 But' wip sys synk' þat' renneþ on 3our chaunce  
 At' crystemasse wel mery may 3e daunce 126

	SIX-TEXT	133
GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.		159
3e seeke land and see for 3our wynnynge		127
As wyse folk' as 3e knowe alle pastates		
Of regnes / 3e be fadres of tydynge		
Of tales bope of pees and of debates /		130
I were right' now of tales desolat		
Nere þat a marchaunt' gon sippen many a 3ere /		
Me taught' a tale which 3e schal after heere		133

[*The Tale*]

**I**N Surrie dwelled whilom a companye [on v 72, 82] 134  
 Of Chapmen riche and þerto sad and trewe  
 That wyde where sent her spycere  
 Clopes of gold and satyn rich of hewe / 137  
 her chaffar was so þrifty and so newe  
 That euery wight had deynte to chaffare  
 wip hem and eek to selle hem of here ware / 140

Now fel it þat þe maystres of þat sort 141  
 han schapen hem to Rome for to wende  
 were it for chapmanhode or for disport  
 Non oper message nolde þey þider sende / 144  
 But came hemself to Rome þis is þe ende  
 And in such place /as þought hem auanntage  
 For here entent þey tooke her herburgage 147

Soiourned naue þese marchauntz in þe toun 148  
 A certeyn tyme as fel to here plesaunce  
 But so bifell þat þexcellent renoun  
 Of þemperoures doughter dame Custaunce 151  
 Reported was with euery circumstaunce  
 vnto þese surrien3 marchauntz in such wyse [leaf 73]  
 Fro day to day as I schal 3ou deuyse / 154

This was þe comyn voys of euery man 155  
 Oure emperour of Rome god him see  
 A doughter hap þat sip þe world bygan  
 To Rekne as wel hir goodnes as hir bewte / 158  
 Nas neuer such anoper as was sche  
 I prey to god hir saue and susteene  
 And wolde sche were of al Europe þe queene 161



	SIX-TEXT	135
GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.		161
In hire is hye bewte wipoute pryde		162
3owþe wipoute grefhed or folye		
To alle here werkes vertu is hire gyde /		
humblesse haþ slayne in hir tyrrannye /		165
Sche is myroure of alle curtesye /		
hir herte is verrey chambre of holynesse		
hir hond mynistre of fredom and almesse		168
And al þis voys is soþ as god is trewe		169
But now to purpos let vs turne a3ein		
These marchantz haue don fraught here schippes newe /		
And whan þey haue þis blisful mayde seyn ·		172
Home to Surrey be þey went a3ein /		
And doon here needes as þey haue don 3ore		
And lyuen in wele I can 3ou say no more /		175
Now fel it þat þese marchaunt3 stoden in grace /		176
Of him þat was þe Sowdan of Surrye		
For whan þey come fro eny straunge place /		
he wolde of his benigne curtesye		179
Make hem good chere and busily aspye		
Tydynges of sondry regnes for to lere /		
The wordes þat þey mighte seen and heere /		182
Among oper þinges specially		183
These marchaunt3 him told of dame Constaunce		
So gret noblesse in earnest so ryally		
That þis Sowdan haþ caught so gret plesaunce		186
To haue hir figure in his remembraunce		
And al his lust and al his besy cure		
was for to loue hir whiles his lyf may dure		189
Par auenture in pilke large booke /		190
which þat is cleped þe heuen I-write was	[leaf 73, back]	
wip sterres whan þat he his burþe took		
That he for loue schulde haue his dep allas /		193

For in þe sterres clerere þen is glas /  
 Is wryten god woot' who-so cowþe it rede  
 The deþ of euery man wipouten drede 196

**I**N sterres many a wynter þer byfore 197  
 was write þe deþ of Ector and Achilles /  
 Of Pompe Iulius er þey were I-bore /  
 The stryf of Thebes and of Ercules / 200  
 Of Sampson Turnus and of Socrates  
 The deþ but mennes wittes ben so dulle /  
 That no wight can wel rede it at þe fulle 203

This sowdan for his pryue counseil sent 204  
 And schortly of þis mater for to pace /  
 he hap to hem declared his entent  
 And seyde hem certeyn but he might haue grace / 207  
 To haue Constance wipinne a litel space  
 he nas but deed and charged hem in hyȝe  
 To schapen for his lyf som remedye 210

Dyuerse men dyuers þinges seyde 211  
 The argumentes casten vp and doun  
 Many a subtyl resoun forþ þey leyden  
 They spekyn of magike and of ambusioun 214  
 But finally as in conclusioun  
 They can nought seen in þat non auauntage  
 Ne in non oþer wey saue in mariage 217

Than sawgh þey þer in such difficulte 218  
 By wey of resoun to speke it al playn ·  
 By cause þat þer was such dyuersite /  
 Bitwen here boþe lawes as þey sayn 221  
 They trowe þat no cristen prince wold fayn  
 wedden his child vnder our lawe swete /  
 That vs was taught by mahoun oure prophete / 224

And he answerde raper þan I lese 225

Constance I wol be cristen douteles /

I moot be heres I may non oþer cheese /

I pray 3ou haldeth 3our arguments in pees / 228

Saueþ my lyf and beþ nat recheles / [leaf 74]

Gop geteþ hire þat hap my lyf in cure /

For in þis wo I may nō lenger dure / 231

What needeþ gretter dilatacioun 232

I say by tretys and ambassatrye

And by þe popes mediacioun

And al þe chirche and al þe chyualrye / 235

That in destruccioun of mawmetrye

And in encresse of cristes lawe deere /

They ben acordid as 3e schal after heere/ 238

How þat þe Soudan and his baronage 239

And alle his lieges schuld I-crystned be /

And he schal haue Constance in mariage/

And certeyn gold I not what quantite 242

And þerfore founden þey suffisant seurte

This same acord was sworn on euery syde/

Now fair Constance almighty god þe guyde / 245

Now wolde som men wayten as I gesse 246

That I schulde tellen al þe puruyaunce /

That þemperour of his gret noblesse /

Hap schapen for his doughter dame Constaunce / 249

wel may men knowe þat so gret ordynaunce

May no man telle in so litel a clause /

As was arrayed for so high a cause / 252

Bisschops ben schapen with hir for to wende 253

lordes ladyes and knightes of renoun

And oþer folk ynowe þis þis is þe ende

And notefied is þurgh out þe toun 256

That euery wight wip gret deuocioun  
 Schulde preye crist þat he þis mariage  
 Receyue in gree and spede þis viage 259

The day is come of hire departyng 260  
 I say þe woful day þat þan is come  
 That þer may be no lenger tarryyng  
 But forþeward þey dresse hem alle & some / 263  
 Constance þat with sorwe is ouercome  
 Ful pale arist and dresseþ hir to wende /  
 For wel sche saugh þer nas non oþer ende 266

Allas what wonder is it/ þough sche wepte [*leaf 74, back*] 267  
 That schal be sent to straunge nacioun  
 Fro freendes þat so tenderly hir kepte /  
 And to be bounde vndur subieccioun 270  
 Of oon sche knew nat his condicioun  
 Housbondes ben al goode and han be ȝore  
 That knowen wyfes I dar say no more / 273

Fader scne seid þy wrecched child Costaunce 274  
 Thy ȝonge doughter fostred vp so softe /  
 And ȝe my mooder my souerayn plesaunce  
 Ouer al þing outaken crist on lofte / 277  
 Constaunce ȝour child hir recomaundeth ofte  
 Vnto ȝour grace / for I schal in to Surrye  
 Ne schal I neuer see ȝou more wip ye 280

Allas vnto þe barbre nacioun 281  
 I most anoon / seþens it is ȝour wille  
 But crist þat starf for our redempcioun  
 So ȝeue me grace his hestes to fulfille / 284  
 I wrecched womman no fors þey I spille /  
 wommen ben born to þraldam and penaunce  
 And to ben vnder mannes gouernaunce 287

	SIX-TEXT	139
GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.		165
I trowe at Troye whan Pirrus brak þe wal		288
Or yleon þat brend Thebes þe Citee		
Ne at Rome for þe harme þurgh hanibal		
That Romyans han venquysshed tymes þre		291
Nas herd such tender wepyng for pite		
As in þe Chambur was for hir partyng		
But forþ sche moot wheþer sche weep or syng		294
O firste meuyng cruel firmament		295
with þi diurnal swough þat crowdest ay		
And hurlest al fro Est to Occident		
That naturelly wold hold anoþer way		298
Thyn crowdyng sette þe heuen in such array		
At þe bygynnyng of þis fiers viage		
That cruel marc3 hap slayn þis marriage		301
Infortunat ascendent tortuous		302
Of which þe lordes helples falle allas		
Out of his angle in to þe derkest hous		
O . Mari3 attezere as in þis kaas	[leaf 75]	305
O feble moone vnhappy been þi paas /		
Thou knettest þe þer þou art nat receyued		
Ther þou were wel fro þennes artow weyued		308
Inprudent Emperour of Rome allas		309
was þer no philosopher in al þy toun		
Is no tyme bet þan oþer in such kaas		
Of viage is þer noon elecciozn		312
Namly to folk of heigh condiciozn		
Nought whan a roote is of a birthe I-knowe		
Allas we ben to lewed and eek to slowe /		315
[ <sup>1</sup> To Shipe] is brought þis woful faire mayde /	[ <sup>1</sup> In a later hund.]	
Solempnely with euery circumstaunce /		
Now Ihū crist so be wiþ 3ou sche sayde /		
Ther nys nomor but far wel fair Custaunce		319

She peyneth hire to make good contienauce  
 And forþ I lete hire sayle in þis manere /  
 And torne I wol aȝein to my matiere / 322

The moder of þe Sawdan ful of vices 323  
 Aspyed haþ hir sones playn entent/  
 how he wol lete his olde sacrifices  
 And right anoon sche for hir counseil sent 326  
 And þey ben come to knowe what sche ment  
 And whan assembled was þis folk in fere  
 Sche sette hir doun and sayd as ȝe schal heere / 329

Lordes quod sche ȝe knowen euerichon 330  
 how þat my sone in poynt is for to lete  
 The holy lawes of our alkaron  
 ȝe ben goddes messangere makamete / 333  
 But oon avow to grete god I hete  
 The lyf schuld raper out of my body stert  
 Or makametes law go out of myn hert 336

What schal vs tyden of þis newe lawe 337  
 But þraldam to oure body and penaunce  
 And afterward in helle to be drawe /  
 For we reneyed mahound oure creaunce 340  
 But lordes wol ȝe maken assuraunce  
 As I schal say assentyng to my lore  
 And I schal make vs sauf for euermore [leaf 75, back] 343

They swornen and assenten euery man 344  
 To lyf wip hir and dye and by hir stonde  
 And euerich in þe beste wise he can  
 To strengþen hir schal al his frendes fonde 347  
 And sche haþ Emperise take on honde  
 which ȝe schul heere þat I schal deuyse /  
 And to hem alle sche spak in þis wyse / 350

	SIX-TEXT 141
GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.	167
We schul first feyne ous cristendom to take	351
Cold watir schal nat greue vs but a lite /	
And I schal such a fest and Reuel make /	
That as I trow I schal þe Sowdan quyte	354
For þough his wyf be cristned neuer so white	
Sche schal haue need to waissche away þe rede	
They sche a font of watir wip hir lede	357
O Sowdones root of iniquite	358
Virago þou Semyram þe secounde	
O serpent vnder feminite	
Lyk to þe serpent deep in helle I-bounde	361
O feyned womman alle þat may confounde	
Vertu and Innocence þurgh þy malice /	
Is bred in þe as nest of euery vice	364
O Satan enuyous syn pilke day	365
That þou were chased fro oure heritage	
wel knewest þou to wommen þe olde way	
Thou madest Eue to bryng vs in seruage	368
Thou wolt fordoon þis cristen mariage	
Thyn instrument so weylaway þe while	
Makestow of wommen whan þou wolt bygile	371
This Sawdones whom I þus blame and wary	372
let pryuely hir counseil gon his way	
what schuld I in þis tale lenger tary	
Sche rideþ to þe Soudan on a day	375
And seyð him þat sche wold reney hir lay	
And cristendam of prestes handes fonge	
Repentyng hir sche hethen was so longe	378
Bysechyng him to doon hir þat honour	379
That sche most haue þe cristen men to feste /	
To plesen hem I wil do my labour	[leaf 76]
The sawdan seith I wol do at þour heste	382

And knelyng' þankeþ hir of þat' requeste  
 So glad he was he nyst nat what' to seye  
 Sche kyst' hir sone and hom sche goþ hir weye 385

## [PART II.]

Arryued ben þe cristen folk' to londe / 386  
 In Surry with a gret' solempne route  
 And hastily þis soudan sent' his sonde  
 First' to his moder and al þe regne aboute 389  
 And seyð his wyf' was comen out' of doute  
 And preyed þir for to ride azein þe queene  
 The honour of his regne to susteene / 392

Gret' was þe prees and riche was tharray 393  
 Of Surriens and Romyans mette in feere  
 The moodur of þe Sowdan riche and gay  
 Receyued hir with al so glad a cheere 396  
 As eny modir might' hir doughter deere  
 And to þe nexte Citee þer bysyde  
 A softe paas solempnely þay ryde 399

Nought' trow I þe triumphe of Iulius 400  
 Of which þat lukan makeþ moche bost'  
 was ryaller ne more curious  
 Than was thasseuble of þis blisful oost' 403  
 But' þis Scorpioun þis wikked goost'  
 This Sowdone for al hir flateryng'  
 Cast' vnder þis ful mortally to styng' 406

The Sawdan comp' himself' sone after þis 407  
 So really þat' wonder is to telle  
 And welcomeþ hir wiþ ioy and blys  
 And þus with myrth and ioy I let' hem dwelle 410



The fruyt of þis matier is þat I telle  
 whan tyme com men þought it for þe best  
 That reuel stynt and men goon to her rest 413

The tyme com þe olde Sowdonesse 414  
 Ordeyned hap þis fest of which I told  
 And to þe feste cristen folk hem dresse  
 [. . . . . no gap in the MS.] 417  
 Ther men may fest and realte byholde  
 And deyntes mo / þan I can of deuyse  
 But al to deere þey bought it ar þey ryse [leaf 76, back] 420

O sodeyn wo þat euer art successour 421  
 ¶ To worldly blis spreynd is wip bitternesse /  
 The ende of oure ioie of oure worldly labour  
 wo occupieth þe fyn of oure gladnesse 424  
 herken þis counseil for thyn sikernesse  
 vpon þyn glade dayes haue in þi mynde  
 The vnwar woo þat cometh ay bihynde 427

For schortly for to tellen at o word 428  
 The Sawdan and þe cristen euerichone  
 Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord  
 But it were Dame Constaunce allone 431  
 This olde Sowdones þis cursed crone  
 hap wip hir frendes doon þis cursed dede  
 For sche hir self wold al þe contre lede 434

Ne þer was surrien noon / þat was conuerted 435  
 That of þe counseil of þe Sawdon woot  
 That he nas alto-hewe or he asterted  
 And Constaunce haue þey take anon foot-hoot 438  
 And in a schippe / steleres god it woot  
 They haue hir set. and bad hir lerne to sayle  
 Out of Surry azeinward to ytaile 441

- A** certein tresour þat sche þider ladde 442  
 And soþ to sayn vitaile gret plente  
 They haue hir zeuen and clopes eek sche hadde  
 And forþ sche saylep to þe salte see 445  
 O my Constaunce ful of benignite  
 O Emperoures 3onge doughter deere  
 he þat is Lord of fortun be þi steere 448
- Sche blessep hir and with ful pitous voys 449  
 Vnto þe croys of crist þan seyde sche  
 O cler o welful auter holy croys  
 Rood of þe lambes blood ful of pite 452  
 That wissh þe world fro old iniquite  
 Me fro þe feend and fro his clowes keepe  
 That day þat I schal drenchen in þe deepe 455
- Victorious tre proteccioun of trewe 456  
 That oonly were worthy for to bere  
 That kyng of heuen with his woundes newe [leaf 77]  
 The white lamb þat hurt was with a spere 459  
 Flemer of feendes out of him and here /  
 On which þy lymes feithfully extenden  
 Me kepe and 3if me might my lyf to menden 462
- 3eres and dayes flette þis creature 463  
 Thurghout þe see of Grece in to þe strayte  
 Of Marrok as it was hir aduenture /  
 O many a sory mele may sche bayte 466  
 After hir deth ful / ofte may sche wayte  
 Or þat þe wilde wawe wol hir dryue  
 Vnto þe place þer as sche schal arryue 469
- Men mighten aske why sche was nouȝt slayn 470  
 Ek at þe fest. who might hir body saue  
 And I answered that demaunde agayn  
 who saued Daniel / in horrible Caue 473

That euery wight sauf he mayster or knaue  
 was wip þe lioun frete or he asterte  
 No wight but god þat he bar in his herte 476

God lust to schewe his wondrous miracle 477  
 In hir for sche schuld seen his mighty werk  
 Crist which þat is to euery harm triacle  
 By certeyn menes ofte as knowen clerkes 480  
 Doth þing for certeyn ende þat ful derk is //  
 To mannes witt / þat for our ignorauce  
 Ne can nought knowe his prudent puruyaunce 483

Now sith sche was nat at þe fest I-slave / 484  
 who kepte hir fro drenching in þe see /  
 who kepte Ionas in þe fisches mawe  
 Til he was spouted vp at Niniue 487  
 wel may men knowe it was no wight but he  
 That kept þe pepul Ebrayk fro her drenchyng  
 wip drye feet / þurghout þe see passyng 490

Who hadde foure spiritz of tempest 491  
 That power han to noyen land and see  
 Boþe norþ and souþ and also west and Est  
 Anoyeþ neyþer londe / see ne tree / 494  
 Sonly þe comaunder of þat was he  
 That fro þe tempest ay þis womman kepte [leaf 77, back]  
 As wel when sche awok as when sche slepte 497

Wher might þis womman mete and drinke haue / 498  
 Thre þer and more / how lasteþ hir vitaille  
 who fedde þe Egipcien marie in þe Caue  
 Or in desert no wight but crist saunþ faile 501  
 Fyf þousand folk / it was a gret meruaile/  
 wip loues fyf and fisses tuo to feede  
 God sent his foyoun at her grete neede 504

Sche dryueþ forþ in to oure Occean 505

Thurghout oure wilde see til atte last

vnder an holte þat men nempne can

Fer in Northumberland þe wawe hir cast 508

And in þe sand þe schip styked so fast

That þennes wold it nouȝt in al a tyde

The wille of crist was þat sche schold abyde 511

The Constabil of / þe castel doun is fare / 512

To se þis wrak / and al þe schip he sought

And fond þis wery womman ful of care

And fand also þe tresour þat sche brought 515

In hir langage mercy sche bisought

The lif out of her body for to wynne

hir to delyuer of woo þat sche was Inne / 518

A maner latyn corrupt was hir speche 519

But algates / þer by sche was vnderstonde

The constabil whan him lust no lenger seche

This woful womman broughte he to londe / 522

Sche kneleþ doun and thanketh goddes sonde

But what sche was sche wolde no man seye

For foul ne faire / þough sche scholde deye 525

Sche was sche seyð so mased in þe see 526

That sche forȝat hir mynde by hire trowþe /

The constable had of hir so gret pitee

And eek his wyf þey wepeden for routhe 529

Sche was so diligent wiþouten slouþe /

To serue and plese euer in þat place

That alle hir louen þat loken on hir face 532

The Constable and dame hermegyld his wyf 533

To telle þou playne in peynes boþe were [leaf 78]

But hermegyld loued constance as hir lyf

And Constance haþ so long herberwed þere 536

In orisoun wiþ many a bitter teere /  
 Til ihū haþ conuerted þurgh his grace  
 Dame hermegyld þe Constables wif of þe place 539

In al þe lond no cristen men durst route 540  
 Al cristen men ben fled from þat contre  
 Thurgh payens þat conquered al a-boute /  
 The places of þe north by land and see 543  
 To wales fled þe cristianite  
 Of olde britouns dwellyng in þis yle /  
 Ther was hir refut for þe mene while 546

But/ 3it nere cristen britouns so exiled 547  
 That þer / nere some in here pryuite /  
 honoured crist and heþen men bygiled  
 And neigh þe Castel such þer dwellid þre 550  
 That oon of hem was blynd and might nat se /  
 But if it were wiþ eyen of his mynde  
 wiþ which men seen after þat þey ben blynde 553

Bright was þe sonne as in someres day 554  
 For which þe constable and his wif also  
 And Constaunce had take þe righte way  
 Toward þe see a forlong wey or two 557  
 To pleyen and to Romen to and fro  
 And in þat/ walk the blynde men þey mette  
 Croked and olde with eyen fast y-schette 560

In name of crist / cryed þis old britoun 561  
 Dame hermegyld 3if me my sight a3eyn  
 This lady wax affrayed of þe soun  
 lest þat hir houseband schortly to sayn 564  
 wold hir for ihū cristes loue haue slayn  
 Til Constaunce made hir bold and bad hir werche  
 The wil of crist as dou3ter of holy chirche 567

- The Constable wax abaissed of þat sight 568  
 And sayde what amounteþ al þis fare  
 Constaunce answered / sir it is cristes might  
 That helpeth folk out of þe feendes snare / 571  
 And so ferforþ sche gan hir lay declare/ [leaf 78, back]  
 That sche þe Constable er þat it was Eue  
 Conuerted and on crist made him bileue 574
- This Constable was no þing lord of þe place 575  
 Of which I speke þer he Constance fond  
 But kept it strongly many a wynter space  
 vnder alla kyng of Northumberlond 578  
 That was ful wys and worþy of his hond  
 Aȝein þe scottes as men may wel heere  
 But tourne aȝein I wil to my mateere 581
- Satan þat euer vs wayteþ to begile / 582  
 Sawe of Constaunce þe persecucioun  
 And cast anon how he might quyt hir while /  
 And made a ȝong knight þat dwelt in þe toun 585  
 Loue hir so hoot of foul affeccioun  
 That verrayly him þouȝt he schulde spille  
 But he of hire / oones had his wille 588
- He wowith hir but it avayleþ nought 589  
 Sche wolde do no synne by no weye  
 And for despyt / he compassed in his þought  
 To maken hir a schamful deþ to deye 592  
 he wayteth whan þe Constable was aweye  
 And pryuyly vpon a nyght he crepte  
 In hermyngyldes chambre whil sche slepte / 595
- Wery forwaked in here Orisoun 596  
 Slepeþ Constaunce and hermyngyld also  
 This knight þurgh Satanas temptacioun  
 Al softely is to þe bed y-go 599

And kutte þe þrote of hermegild a two /  
 And leyð þe bloody knyf/ by dame Constaunce  
 And went his way þat god ȝeue him meschaunce 602

Sone after comp þis Constable hom agayn 603  
 And eek alla þat was kyng of þat lond  
 And say his wyf dispitously I-slayn  
 For which ful oft / he wept and wrong his hond 606  
 And in þe bed þe blodly knyf he fond  
 By Dame Custaunce allas what might he say  
 For verray woo / hir witt was al a-way 609

To king Alla was told al þis meschaunce [leaf 79] 610  
 And eek/þe tyme and wher and eek þe wyse  
 That in a schip was founden þis Constaunce  
 As here bifore ȝe haue herd me deuyse / 613  
 The kinges hert of pite gan agrise  
 whan he saugh so benigne a creature  
 Falle in disese and in mysauenture 616

For as þe lomb toward his deþ is brought / 617  
 So stant þis Innocent bifore þe kyng  
 This false knight þat hap þis tresoun wrought  
 Bereþ hir an hand þat sche hath don þis þing 620  
 But neuer þe les þer was gret mornyng  
 Among þe people and seyn þey can not gesse  
 That sche had doon so gret a wikkednesse 623

For þey han seyen hir so vertuous 624  
 And louyng hermegyld right as hir lyf  
 Of þis bar witnesse euerich in þat hous  
 Saue he þat slowȝ hermegyld with his knyf 627  
 This gentil kyng hap caught a gret motyf  
 Of his witnesse and þought/ he wold enquere  
 Deppere in þis cas a troupe to lere 630

Allas Constaunce þou ne has no champioun 631

Ne fighte canstow nat' so welaway

But' he þat' for oure redempcioun

Bonde Sathan and ȝit' liþ þer he lay 634

So be þy stronge champioun þis day

For but crist' vpon þe miracle kythe

withouten gilt' þou schalt' be slayn as swithe 637

Sche set' hir doun on knees and þan sche sayde 638

Immortal god þat' sauedest' Susanne

For false blame and þou mercyful mayde

Mary I mene doughter of' seint' Anne 641

Bifore whos child aungeles syng' Osanne

If' I be gultles of' þis felonye

My socour be for elles schal I dye 644

Haue ȝe not' seye somtyme a pale face 645

Among' a prees of' him þat' hap' be lad

Toward his dep' wher him geyneþ no grace /

And such a colour in his face hap' had [leaf 79, back] 648

Men mighte knowe his face was so bystad

Among' alle þe faces in þat route

So stant Constance and lokep' hire aboute / 651

O queenes lyuyng' in prosperite 652

Duchesses and ȝe ladies euerychon

haueþ som reuþe on hir aduersite

An emperoures doughter stond allon 655

Sche nath no wight' to whom to make hir moon

O blod ryal þat' stondest' in þis drede /

Ferre be þy frendes at þy grete neede / 658

This Alla kyng' hap' such compassioun 659

As gentil hert' is fulfild of' pite

That' from his eyen ran þe water doun

Now hastily do fech a book' quod he / 662



And if þis knight wil swere how þat sche /  
 This womman slow<sup>3</sup> ȝet wol we us avyse  
 whom þat we wille schal be oure iustise 665

A britoun book I-write wip euaungiles 666  
 was fette and on þis book/ he swor anoon  
 Sche gultif was and in þe mene whiles  
 An hond him smot vpon þe nekke boon 669  
 That doun he fel anon right at a stoon  
 And boþe his yen brast out of his face  
 In sight of euery body in þat place 672

A vois was herd in general audience 673  
 And seist þou hast disclaundred gulteles  
 The doughter of holy chirche in hire presence  
 Thus hastow doon & ȝit I holde my pees 676  
 Of þis meruaile agast was al þe prees  
 As mased folk þey stoden euerychon  
 For drede of wreche saue Custaunce allon 679

Gret was þe drede and eek þe repentaunce 680  
 Of hem þat hadden gret suspeccioun  
 vpon þe sely Innocent Custaunce  
 And for þis miracle in conclusioun 683  
 And by Custaunces mediacioun  
 The kyng and many oþer in þe place  
 Conuerted was / thanked be cristes grace [leaf 80] 686

This false knight was slayn for his vntroupe / 687  
 By Iuggement of Alla hastyly  
 And ȝit Custaunce hap of his dep gret roupe  
 And after þis ihus of his mercy 690  
 Made alla wedde ful solempnely  
 This holy mayde þat is bright and schene /  
 And þus hap crist I-maad Constance a queene 693

But who was woful if I schal not lye / 694

Of þis weddyng but Domegild and þo

The kynges mooder ful of tyrannye

hir þought hir cursed herte brast a-two 697

Sche wolde nat hir sone had I-do so

hir þought despyte / þat he schulde take

So straunge a creature vnto his make 700

Me lust not of þe cas ne of þe stree 701

Make so long a tale as of þe corn

what schuld I telle of þe realte

Of mariage / or which cours goþ biforn 704

who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn

The fruyt of euery tale is for to seye

They ete & drynk / and daunce / and synge & pleye 707

They gon to bed as it was skile & right 708

For þough þat wyfes ben ful holy þinges

They moste take in pacience a night

Such maner necessities as ben plesynges 711

To folk that han I-wedded hem wiþ rynges

And haluendel her holynesse ley a side

And for þe tyme it may non oper betyde 714

On hire he gat a knaue child anon 715

And to a bisschope & a Constable eeke

he took his wyf to kepe whan he is goon

To scotlandward his foomen for to seeke 718

Now faire Custaunce þat is so humble & meeke

So long is goon wiþ childe til þat stille

Sche held hir chambre abidyng goddes wille 721

The tyme is come a knaue child sche bere 722

Maurius atte funstone men him calle

This Constabil doþ come forþ a messenger [leaf 80, back]

And wrot to his kyng þat cleped was Alle 725

how þat þis blisful tydyng' is bifalle  
 And oþer þinges spedful for to seye  
 he takeþ þe *lettre* and forþ he goþ his weye 728

This messenger to doon his auauntage 729  
 vnto þe kynges moder he goþ ful swiþe  
 And salueth hire / fair in his langage  
 Ma dame quod he 3e may be glad and bliþe 732  
 And þanke god an hundred þousand siþe  
 My lady queen haþ child wipouten doute  
 To ioye and blis of al þe reame aboute 735

Lo heer þe *lettres* sealed of þis þing' 736  
 That I mot bere with al þe hast I may  
 If 3e wole ought vnto 3oure sone þe kyng'  
 I am 3oure seruaunt boþe night and day 739  
 Doungyld answerde as now þis tyme nay  
 But here al nyght I wol þou take þy rest  
 To morwen I wil say þe what me lest 742

This messenger drank' sadly ale and wyn 743  
 And stolen were his *lettres* pryuely  
 Out of his box whil he sleep as a swyn  
 And countrefeet þey were subtily 746  
 Anoper sche him wroot' ful synfully  
 vnto þe kyng' direct/ of þis matiere  
 Fro his Constable as 3e schul after heere 749

The *lettre* spak' þe queen delyuered was 750  
 Of so orryble and feendly creature  
 That in þe castel noon so hardy was  
 That eny while dorste þerin endure / 753  
 The mooder was an Elf by auenture  
 Bycome by charmes or by sorcerie  
 And euery man hatip hir companyne 756

**W**o was þis kyng<sup>t</sup> whan he þis letter had sein 757  
 But<sup>t</sup> to no wight<sup>t</sup> he told his sorwes sore  
 But<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> his owen hand he wrot<sup>t</sup> agayn .  
 welcome þe sond of<sup>t</sup> crist<sup>t</sup> for eueremore 760  
 To me þat<sup>t</sup> am now lerned in his lore  
 lord welcome be þy lust<sup>t</sup> and þy pleasaunce [leaf 81]  
 My lust<sup>t</sup> I putte al in þyn ordinaunce 763

**K**epeth þis child al be it foul or fair 764  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> my wyf<sup>t</sup> vnto myn hom comyng<sup>t</sup>  
 Crist<sup>t</sup> whan him lust<sup>t</sup> may sende me an hair  
 More agreable þan þis to my likyng<sup>t</sup> 767  
 The lettre he seleth pryuyly wepyng<sup>t</sup>  
 which to þe messenger he took<sup>t</sup> ful sone  
 And forþ he goth þer nys no more to done 770

**O** messenger fulfild of<sup>t</sup> dronkenesse 771  
 Strong<sup>t</sup> is þy breþ þy lymes faltren ay  
 And þou bywreyst<sup>t</sup> alle sykernesse  
 Thy mynde is lorn þou ianglest<sup>t</sup> as a lay 774  
 Thy face is torned al in a newe array  
 Ther drunkenesse regnep<sup>t</sup> in eny route  
 Ther is no counseil hid wipouten doute 777

**O** Domegyld I haue non englich digne 778  
 vnto þy malice and þy tyrannye  
 And þerfor to þe feend I þe resigne  
 let<sup>t</sup> him endyten of<sup>t</sup> þi treccherie 781  
 Fy mannyssch fy .o. nay by god I lye  
 Fy feendly spirit<sup>t</sup> for I dar wel telle  
 Though þou here walke þy spirit<sup>t</sup> is in helle 784

**T**his messenger comp<sup>t</sup> fro þe kyng<sup>t</sup> agayn 785  
 And at<sup>t</sup> þe kinges modres court<sup>t</sup> he light<sup>t</sup>  
 And sche was of<sup>t</sup> þis messenger ful fayn  
 And plesep<sup>t</sup> him in al þat<sup>t</sup> euer sche might<sup>t</sup> 788

he drank' and wel his gurdel vnderpight'  
 he slepeþ and he fareþ in his gyse  
 Al nyght' vnto þe sonne gan arise 791

Eft' were his lettres stolen euerichon 792  
 And countrefeted lettres in þis wise  
 The kyng' comaundeþ his constable anon  
 vp peyne of hangyng' of an heiȝ Iustise 795  
 That' he schulde suffre in no maner wyse  
 Constaunce in his regne for to abyde  
 Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde 798

But' in þe same schip as he hir fond 799  
 hire and hir ȝonge sone and al hire gere [leaf 81, back]  
 he schulde putte and crowde fro þe londe  
 And charge hire þat' sche neuer eft' come þere 802  
 ·O. my Constaunce wel may þy goost' haue fere  
 And slepyng' in þy drem ben in penaunce  
 whan Domegyl cast' al þis ordynaunce / 805

This messanger a-morwe whan he awook' 806  
 vnto þe castel held þe nexte way  
 And to þe constable he þe lettre took'  
 And whan þat' he þe pitous lettre say 809  
 Ful ofte he seyð alas and welaway  
 Lord crist' quod he how may þis world endure  
 So ful of synne is many a creature 812

O mighty god if þat' it be þy wille 813  
 Sep þou art' rightful iugge how may þis be /  
 That' þou wolt' suffre Innocentȝ to spille /  
 And wikked folk' regne in prosperite 816  
 ·O good Constance alas so wo is me  
 That' I moot' be þy tormentour or deye  
 On schamful dep þer is non oþer weye 819

- Wepynge bope ȝong & olde in al þat place 820  
 whan þat þe kyng þis corsed lettre sent  
 And Constance with a dedly pale face  
 The fayre day toward hir schip sche went 823  
 But neuerþeles sche takeþ in good entent  
 The wil of crist / and knelyng on þe grounde  
 Sche sayde lord ay welcome be þy sonde 826
- He þat me kepte fro þe false blame 827  
 whil I was on þe lond amonges ȝou  
 He can me kepe from harm & eek fro schame  
 In þe see al þough I se nat how 830  
 As strong as euer he was he is right now  
 In him trust I. & in his mooder deere  
 That is to me my sayl and eek my steere / 833
- Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm 834  
 And knelyng pitously to him sche sayde /  
 Pees litle sone I wol do þe noon harm  
 wiþ þat hir kerchef of hir hed sche brayde 837  
 And ouer his litel yȝen sche it layde [leaf 82]  
 And in hir arm sche lullith it wel faste  
 And vnto heuen hir eyȝen vp sche caste 840
- Moder quod sche and mayde bright marie 841  
 Sop is þat þurgh wommannes eggement  
 Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to dye  
 For which þy child was on a cros torent 844  
 Thyn blisful eyȝen sawh al þis torment  
 Then nys þer noon comparisoun bitwene  
 Thy wo and any woo may nat sustene 847
- Thow saugh þy child I-slaw byfor þyn yen 848  
 And ȝit now lyueþ my litel child par fay  
 Now lady bright to whom alle woful cryen  
 Thou glory of wommanhod þou faire may 851

Thou heuen of refute brighte sterre of day  
 Rewe on my child þat of þyn gentillesse /  
 Rewest on euery synful in destresse 854

O litel child allas what is þi gilt 855  
 That neuer wroughtest synne as ȝet par de  
 why wil þyn harde fader han þe spilt  
 O. mercy deere and Constable seyde sche 858  
 And let my litel child here dwelle with þe  
 And if þou darst not sauē him for blame /  
 So kys him oones in his fadres name 861

Ther wiþ sche lokēd bakward to þe lond 862  
 And seyde far wel housbond rewþeles  
 And vp sche rist and walkeþ down þe stronde  
 Toward þe schip hir folweþ al þe prees 865  
 And euer sche preyed hir child to hold his pees  
 And took hir leue and wiþ an holy entent  
 Sche blesseþ hire and to þe schip sche went 868

Vytailled was þe schip it is no drede 869  
 Abundauntly for hire ful longe space  
 And oper necessities þat schulde nede  
 Sche had ynowȝ heryed be cristeȝ grace 872  
 For wynd and water almighty god purchase  
 And bryng hir hom I can no bettre say  
 But in þe see sche dryueþ forþ hir way 875

[PART III.]

Alla þe kyng comp hom soon after þis [leaf 82, back] 876  
 vnto þe Castel of þe which I tolde  
 And askeþ wher his wyf and his child ys  
 The Constable gan aboute his herte colde 879

And playnly al þe maner he him tolde  
 As ȝe han herd / I can telle it no better  
 And schewed þe kynges seal and his letter 882

And seyde lord as ȝe comaunded me 883  
 vp peyne of deþ so haue I do certayn  
 This messenger tormented was til he  
 Moste biknowe and telle it plat and playn . 886  
 Fro nyght to night in what place he had layn .  
 And þus by witt/ and subtil enquiryng  
 ymaged was by wham þis gan to spryng 889

The hand was knowen þat þe lettre wroot 890  
 And al þe venym of þis cursed dede  
 But in what wyse certeynly I noot  
 Theffect is þis þat alla out of drede 893  
 his moder slough as men may pleyndly reede /  
 For þat sche traytour was to hir ligeaunce  
 Thus ended olde Domegild wip meschaunce 896

The sorwe þat/ þis alla night and day 897  
 Makþ for his wyf and for his child also  
 Ther is no tonge þat it telle may  
 But now I wol vnto Custaunce go 900  
 That fleetetþ in þe see in peyne and wo  
 .V. ȝeer and more as likeþ cristes sonde  
 Er þat hir schip approched vnto londe 903

Vnder an hethen castel atte last 904  
 Of which þe name in my text nouȝt I fynde  
 Constaunce and eek hir child þe see vpcast  
 Almighty god þat saneth al mankynde / 907  
 Haue on Constaunce and on hir child som mynde  
 That fallen is in hethen hond eft sone  
 In poynt to spille as I schal telle ȝou soone 910



Doun fro þe Castel comþ þer many a wight 911

To gawren on þis schip and on Constaunce

But schortly fro þe castal on a night

The lordes styward God ȝiue him meschaunce [leaf 83] 914

A þeeft þat had reneyed oure creaunce

Com in to schip alone and seyde he scholde

hir lemman be wheþir sche wold or nolde 917

Who was þis wrecched womman þo bigoon 918

hire childe criep and sche pytously

But blisful mary hilp hir right anon

For wiþ hir strengþe wel and mightily 921

The theef fel ouer boord al sodeinly

And in þe see he drenched for vengauce

And þus hap crist vnwemmed kept Constance 924

O foule lust/ O luxurie lo þin ende / 925

Nought oonly þat þou feyntest mannes mynde

But verrayly þou wolt his body schende

The ende of þyn werk or of þy lustes blynde 928

his compleynyng how many may men fynde

That nought for werk som tyme but for þentent

To doon his synne ben eyþer slayn or schent / 931

How may þis weyke womman han þe strengþe 932

hir to defende aȝein þe renegat

O Goliath vnmesurable of lengþe

how mighte dauid make þe so mate 935

So ȝong and of armure so desolate

how dorst he loke vpon þyn dredful face

wel may men seyn it nas but goddes grace 938

Who ȝaf Iudith corage or hardynesse / 939

To slen him Olefernes in his tent

And to delyueren out þe wrecchednes

The peple of god I say in þis entent 942

That right as good spiryte vigor sent  
 To hem and saued hem out of meschaunce /  
 So sent he might and vigor to Constaunce 945

Forth goþ hir schip þurghout þe narwe mouth 946  
 Of Iubalter and Septe dryuyng ay  
 Somtyme west som tyme north and south  
 And somtyme Est ful many a wery way 949  
 Til cristes mooder blessed be sche ay  
 hap schapen þurgh hir endeles goodnesse  
 To make an ende of hir heuynesse [leaf 83, back] 952

Now let vs stynt of Constance but a þrowe 953  
 And speke we of / þe Romain Emperour  
 That out of Surrye hap by lettres knowe  
 The slaughter of cristen folk and deshonour 956  
 Doon to his douȝter by a fals traytour  
 I mene þe cursed and wikked sowdenesse  
 That at þe fest leet slee boþe more and lesse 959

For which þis Emperour hap sent anon 960  
 his senatours with real ordynaunce  
 And oper lordes got wot many oon  
 On surriens to take high vengauce 963  
 They brenne / sleen / and bringen hem to meschaunce  
 Ful many a day but schortly þis is þende  
 homward to Rome þey schapen hem to wende 966

This Senatour repayreþ wiþ victorie 967  
 To Romeward saylyng ful really  
 And mette þe schip dryuyng as seiþ þe story  
 In which Constance sitteþ ful pitously 970  
 No þing ne knew he what sche was ne why  
 Sche was in such aray / sche nolde seye  
 Of hire astat al þough sche scholde deye 973

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GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334.		187
He bryngeþ hir to Rome and to his wyf		974
he ȝaf hir and hir ȝonge sone also		
And wiþ þe Senatour lad sche hir lyf		
Thus can our lady. bryngen out of woo		977
woful Constance and many anoper moo		
And longe tyme dwelled sche in þat place		
In holy werkes. as euer was hir grace /		980
The Senatores wif hir aunte was		981
But for al þat sche knew hir neuer more		
I wol no lenger taryen in þis cas		
But to kyng Alla which I spak of ȝore /		984
That for his wyf wepeþ and sikeþ sore /		
I wol retorne / and lete I wol Constaunce		
vnder þe Senatores gouernaunce		987
Kyng alla which þat had his mooder slayn		988
vpon a day fel in such repentaunce /		
That if I schortly telle schal and playn	[leaf 84]	
To Rome he comeþ to receyue his penaunce		991
And putte him in þe popes ordynaunce		
In heigh and lowe and ihū crist bysought		
Forȝef his wikked werkes þat he wrought		994
The fame anon þurgh Rome toun is born		995
how alla kyng schal come in pilgrymage		
By herberiouȝ þat wenten him biforn		
For which þe Senatour as was vsage		998
Rood him aȝein and many of his lynage		
As wel to schewen his magnificence		
As to doon eny kyng a reuerence		1001
Gret cheere doþ þis noble Senatour		1002
To kyng Alla and he to him also		
Euerich of hem doþ oper gret honour		
And so bifel þat on a day or two		1005

This Senatour is to kyng' Alla go  
 To fest' and schortly if I schal not lye  
 Constances sone / went in his companye 1008

Som men wold seyn at request' of Custaunce 1009  
 This Senatour hap lad þis child to feste  
 I may not telle euery circumstaunce  
 Be as be may þer was he atte leste 1012  
 But soth it is right' at his modres heste  
 Byforn hem alle duryng' þe metes space  
 The child stood lokyng' in þe kynges face 1015

This alla kyng' hap of þe child gret' wonder 1016  
 And to þe Senatour he seyð anoon  
 whos is þat' faire child þat' stondeþ 3onder  
 I not' quod he by god and by seynt' Ion 1019  
 A moder he hap but fader hap he non  
 That I of' woot' and schortly in a stounde  
 he told Alla how þat' þis child was founde / 1022

But god woot quod þis senatour also 1023  
 So vertuous a lyuer in my lyf'  
 Ne saugh I neuer such as sche nomo  
 Of' worldly womman mayden or of' wyf' 1026  
 I dar wel say sche hadde leuer a knyf'  
 Thurghout' hir brest' þan ben a womman wikke [leaf 84, back]  
 Ther is no man can bryng' hir to þat' prikke 1029

Now was þis child as lik' vnto Custaunce 1030  
 As possible is a creature to be  
 This alla hap þe face in remembraunce  
 Of Dame Custaunce and þer on mused he 1033  
 If þat' þe chilles mooder were ought' sche  
 That' is his wyf' and pryuely he hight'  
 And sped him fro þe table þat' he might' 1036

- Par fay þought he fantom is in myn heed 1037  
 I ought to deme of righful Iuggement  
 That in þe salte see my wyf is deed  
 And afterward he made þis argument 1040  
 what woot I wher crist hap hider sent  
 My wyf by see as wel as he hir sent  
 To my contre fro þennes þat sche went 1043
- And after noom home wiþ þe senatour 1044  
 Goth alla for to see þis wonder chaunce  
 This Senatour doþ alla gret honour  
 And hastely he sent after Custaunce 1047  
 But trusteþ wel hir luste nat to daunce /  
 whan þat sche wiste wherfore was þat sonde  
 vnnethes on hir feet / sche mighte stonde / 1050
- Whan alla saugh his wyf fayre he hir grette 1051  
 And wepte þat it was rewþe to se  
 For at þe firste look he on hir sette  
 he knew wel verrely þat it was sche 1054  
 And for sorwe as domb sche stant as tre  
 So was hire herte schett in his distresse  
 whan sche remembred his vnkyndenesse 1057
- Twies sche swowned in his owen sight 1058  
 he wept and him excuseþ pitously  
 Now god quod he and alle his halwes bright  
 So wisly on my soule haue mercy 1061  
 That of þoure harm as gulteles am I  
 As is maurice my sone so lyk þoure face  
 Elles þe feend me fecche out of þis place / 1064
- Long was þe sobbyng and þe bitter peyne 1065  
 Or þat here woful herte mighte cesse [leaf 85]  
 Gret was þe pite for to here hem pleyne  
 Thurgh whiche playnt gan here wo encresse 1068

I pray 3ou alle my labour to relese  
 I may not telle al here sorwe vnto morwe  
 I am so wery for to speke of þe sorwe / 1071

But fynally whan þat the sop is wist 1072  
 That alla gilteles was of hir woo  
 I trowe an hundred tymes þey ben kist  
 And such a blys is þer bitwix hem tuo 1075  
 That saue þe ioie þat lasteþ eueremo  
 Ther is noon lyk þat eny creature  
 hap seyn or schal. whil þat þe world may dure 1078

Tho prayde sche hir housbond meekely 1079  
 In þe relees of hir pytous pyne  
 The he wold preye hir fader specially  
 That of his maieste he wold enclyne 1082  
 To vouche sauf som tyme with him to dyne  
 Sche preyed him eek he schulde by no weye  
 Vnto hir fader no word of hir seye 1085

Som men wold seye þat hir child Maurice 1086  
 Dop his message vnto þe Emperour  
 But as I gesse alla was nat so nyce  
 To him þat is so souerayn of honour 1089  
 As he þat is of cristes folk þe flour  
 Sent eny child but it is best to deeme  
 he went himsilf and so it may wel seme / 1092

This Emperour hap graunted gentilly 1093  
 To come to dyner as he him bysought  
 As wel rede I he loked besily  
 vpon þe child and on his douzter þought 1096  
 Alla god to his In and as him ought  
 Arrayed for þis fest in euery wyse  
 As ferforth as his connyng may suffise 1099

## GROUP B. § 2. MAN OF LAW'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 191

The morwe cam and alla gan him dresse 1100

And eek<sup>t</sup> his wyf<sup>t</sup> þe Emperour for to meete

And for þey ryde in ioie and in gladnesse /

And whan sche saugh hir fader in þe streete 1103

Sche light<sup>t</sup> a doun and falleþ him to feete [leaf 85, back]

Fader quod sche 3our 3onge child Constance

Is now ful clene ou of<sup>t</sup> 3our remembraunce 1106

I am 3our doughter Custaunce quod sche 1107

That<sup>t</sup> whilom 3e haue sent<sup>t</sup> vnto Surrye

It<sup>t</sup> am I fader þat<sup>t</sup> in þe salte see

was put<sup>t</sup> alloon and dampned for to dye 1110

Now goode fader mercy I 3ou crye

Send me no more vnto noon hethenesse

But<sup>t</sup> þanke my lord her of<sup>t</sup> his kyndenesse 1113

Who can þe pytous Ioye telle al 1114

Bitwix hem þre siþ þey be þus I-mette

But<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> my tale make an ende I schal

The day goþ fast<sup>t</sup> I wol no lenger lette 1117

This glade folk<sup>t</sup> to dyner þey ben sette

In ioie and blys at<sup>t</sup> mete I let<sup>t</sup> hem dwelle

A þousand fold wel more þan I can telle . 1120

This child Maurice was sipþen Emperour 1121

I-maad by þe pope and lyued cristenly

To cristes chirche dede he gret<sup>t</sup> honour

But<sup>t</sup> I let<sup>t</sup> al his story passen by 1124

Of<sup>t</sup> Custaunce is my tale specially

In olde Romain gestes men may fynde

Maurices lyf<sup>t</sup> I bere it nought<sup>t</sup> in mynde 1127

This kyng<sup>t</sup> alla whan he his tyme say 1128

with his Constaunce his holy wyf<sup>t</sup> so swete

To Engelond þey com þe righte way

wher as þey lyue in ioie and in quyete 1131

But litel whil it last I 3ou biheete :  
 Ioy of þis world // for tyme wol not abyde  
 Fro day to night it chaungeth as þe tyde 1134

Who lyued euer in such delyt a day 1135  
 That him ne meued eyþer his conscience  
 Of Ire or talent / or som maner affray  
 Enuy or pride or passioun or offence 1138  
 I ne say but for þis ende þis sentence  
 But litel whil in ioye or in plesaunce  
 lasteþ þe blis / of alla with Custaunce 1141

For deth þat takþ of heigh & low his rent [leaf 86] 1142  
 whan passed was a 3eere as I gesse /  
 Out of þis worlde / kyng alla he hent  
 For whom Custauns. hap ful gret heuynesse / 1145  
 Now let vs pray. þat god his soule blesse /  
 And dame Custaunce fynally to say  
 Toward þe toun of Rome goþ hir way 1148

To Rome is come þis nobil creature 1149  
 And fynt hir freendes þer boþe hool & sound  
 Now is sche skaped al hir auenture  
 And whanne sche hir fader had I-founde 1152  
 Doun on hir knees falleþ sche to grounde  
 wepyng for tendirnes in herte blithe  
 Sche heried god an hundred þousand sithe 1155

In vertu and in holy almesdede 1156  
 They lyuen alle. and neuer a sondre wende  
 Til deþ departe hem þis lyf þey lede  
 And far now wel my tale is at an ende 1159  
 Now ihū crist þat of his might may sende /  
 Ioy after wo gouerne vs in his grace /  
 And keep ous alle. þat ben in þis place / 1162



**O**ur Ost' vppon his styrops stood anoon.  
 And seyde good men herkneth euerychoon.  
 This was a prifty tale for þe noones  
 Sir parisshe prest' quod he for goodes boones 1166  
 Tel out' a tale / as was þy forward 3ore  
 I see wel þat 3e lered men in lore  
 Can moche good by goddes dignete  
 The parsoun him answerde ben dicite 1170  
 what' eyleþ þe man so synfully to swere  
 Our Ost' answerd. O Iankyn be 3e þere  
 I smel a loller in þe wynd quod he  
 Now good men quod our Oste / herkneþ me 1174  
     *[A break of one line in the MS.]*  
 For we schul haue a predicacioun  
 This loller wolde prechen vs heer som what /  
 Nay by my fader soule þat' schal he nat/ 1178  
 Sayde the sompnour he schal heer nau3t' preche  
 he schal no gospel preche here ne teche *[leaf 86, back]*  
 we leuyn alle in þe grete god quod he  
 He wolde schewen som difficulte 1182  
 Or springen cokkil in our clene corn  
 And þerfor ost' I warne þe byforn  
 My ioly body schal a tale telle  
     ¶ Here endith þe man of lawe his tale.

## GROUP D. FRAGMENT V.

## § 1. WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE.

¶ Here bygynneth the prologe of the wyf of Bathe

**E**xperiens þough noon auctorite  
 were in þis world . it were ynough for me  
 To speke of wo þat is in mariage  
 For lordyngs syns I twelf ȝer was of age 4  
 I thank it god þat is eterne on lyue  
 housbondes atte chirch dore . I haue had fyue  
 For I so ofte might haue weddid be  
 And alle were worpy men in here degre 8  
 But me was taught nought longe tyme goon is  
 That synnes crist went neuer but onys  
 To weddyng in þe Cane of Galile  
 That by þe same ensampul taught he me 12  
 That I ne weddid schulde be but ones  
 Herken such a scharp word for þe nones  
 Biside a welle Iñc god and man .  
 Spak in reproef of þe Samaritan 16  
 Thou hast y-had fyue housbondes quod he  
 And þat ilk man which þat now hap þe  
 Is nouȝt þin housbond þus he sayd certayn  
 what þat he ment þer by I can not sayn 20  
 But þat I axe why þe fyfte man  
 was nought housbond to þe Samaritan  
 How many might sche haue in mariage  
 ȝit herd I neuer tellen in myn age 24

Vppon þis noumbre diffinicioun  
Men may diuine and glosen vp and doun  
But wel I wot wipou̅ten eny lye  
God bad vs for to . wax and multiplie 28  
That gentil tixt . can I wel vnderstonde  
Ek wel I wot he sayd myn housebonde  
Schuld lete fader and moder and folwe me [leaf 87]  
But of no noumber menciou̅n made he 32  
Of Bygamyē . or of Octogomyē /  
why schuld men speken of þat vilonyē /  
lo hier þe wise kyng Daun Salamon  
I trow he hadde wyfes mo þan oon . 36  
As wold god it were leful vnto me  
To be refreissed half so oft as he  
which ȝift of god had he for alle his wyuys  
No man hap such þat in þe world on lyue is 40  
God wot þis nobil king as to my wit  
The firste night had many a mery fit/  
with ech of hem so wel was him on lyue  
I-blessid be god þat I haue weddid fyue 44  
welcome þe sixte whan þat euer he schal  
For sothe I nyl not kepe me chast in al  
whan myn housbond is fro þe world I-gon  
Som cristne man schal wedde me anoon 48  
For þan þapostil saith þat I am fre  
To wedde a goddis haf wher so it be  
he saith þat to be weddid is no synne  
Bet is to be weddid þan to brynne 52  
what recchith me what folk sayn viloyne  
Of schewith lameth or of Bigamyē /  
I wot wel abram was an holy man  
And Iacob eek as ferforth as I can 56  
And ech of hem had wyues mo than tuo  
And many another holy man also  
whan sawe ȝe in eny maner age  
That highe god defendid mariage 60

By expres word I pray 3ow tellith me  
 Or wher comaunded he virginite  
 I wot as wel as 3e it is no drede /  
 Thapostil whan he spekp of maydenhede 64  
 he sayd þat precept þer of had he noon  
 Men may counseil a womman to be oon  
 But counselyng nys no comaundement  
 He put it in our owne Iuggement / 68  
 For hadde god comaundid maydenhede / . [leaf 87, back]  
 Than had he dampnyd weddyng with þe dede  
 And certes if þer were no seed I-sowe /  
 Virginite wher-on schuld it growe 72  
 Poul ne dorst not comaunde atte lest  
 A þing of which his maister 3af non hest  
 The dart is set vpon virginite  
 Cach who-so may who rennith best / let se 76  
 But þis word is not taken of euery wight  
 But þer as god list 3iue it of his might/  
 I wot wel þat þapostil was a mayde  
 But napeles pough þat he wrot or sayde 80  
 he wolde þat euery wight were such as he /  
 Al nys but counseil vnto virginite  
 And for to ben a wyf he 3af me leue  
 Of indigence. so nys it to repreue 84  
 to wedde me if þat my make deye  
 withoute excepcioun of bigamye  
 Al were it good to womman for to touche  
 he mente in his bed or in his couche 88  
 For peril is boþe fuyr an tow to assemble  
 3e knowe what þis ensample wold resemble  
 This is al and som / he holdith virginite  
 More parfit þan weddyng in frelte 92  
 Frelte clepe I but if þat he and sche  
 wold leden al her lif in chastite  
 I graunt it wel I haue noon enuye  
 Though maidenhede preferre bygamye 96

It likeþ hem to be clene in body and gost  
 Of myn estate I nyl make no bost  
 For wel 3e wot a lord in his houshold  
 He nath not euery vessel ful of gold 100  
 Som ben of tre and don her lord seruise  
 God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise  
 And euery hap of god a propre 3ifte  
 Som þis som þat as him likith to schifte 104  
 Virginite is gret perfeccioun  
 And continens eek wip gret deuocioun  
 But crist þat of perfeccioun is welle [leaf 88]  
 Bad nouȝt euery wight schuld go and selle 108  
 Al þat he had and 3iue it to þe pore  
 And in such wise folwe him and his fore /  
 he spak to hem þat wolde lyue parfytly  
 But lordyngs by 3our leue þat am not I 112  
 I wol bystowe þe flour of myn age /  
 In þe actes and in þe fruytes of mariage  
 Tel me also to what conclusioun  
 were membres maad of generacioun 116  
 And in what wise was a wight y-wrouȝt  
 Trustith right wel þay were nouȝt maad for nouȝt  
 Glose who-so wol and say boþe vp and doun  
 þat þay were made for purgacioun 120  
 Oure boþe vryn and þinges smale /  
 was eek to knowe a femel fro a male  
 And for non oper cause say 3e no  
 Thexperiens wot wel it is not so / 124  
 So þat þese clerke ben not with me wroþe /  
 I say þis þat þay makid ben for boþe  
 þat is to say for office and for ease  
 Of engendrure þer we god nouȝt displease 128  
 why schuld men ellis in her bokes sette  
 That man schal 3elde to his wif his dette  
 Now wher-wip schuld he paye his payement  
 If he ne vsed his sely instrument 132

Than were þay maad vp a creature  
 To purge vryn and eek' for engendrure  
 By I say not' þat' euery wight' is holde  
 That' hap such harneys as I to ȝow tolde 136  
 To gon and vsen hem in engendrure  
 Than schuld men take of' chastite no cure  
 Crist' was a mayde and schapen as a man  
 And many a seynt sin þat' þe world bygan 140  
 ȝit' lyued þay euer in parfyt' charite  
 I nyl enuye no virginite  
 let' hem be bred of' pured whete seed  
 And let' vs wyues eten barly breed 144  
 And ȝet' wip barly bred men telle can [leaf 88, back]  
 Oure lord refreisschid many a man  
 In such astat' as god hap cleped ous  
 I wil perseuer I am not' precious 148  
 In wyfhode I wil vse myn instrument'  
 Als frely as my maker hap me it sent  
 If' I be daungerous god ȝiue me sorwe  
 Myn housbond schal han it at' eue and at' morwe 152  
 whan þat' him list' com forth and pay his dette  
 An housbond wol I haue I wol not' lette /  
 which schal be boþe my dettour and my þral  
 And haue his tribulacioun wip al 156  
 vpon his fleissch whil þat' I am his wyf  
 I haue þe power duryng' al my lif  
 vpon his propre body and not' he /  
 Right' þus þapostil told it vnto me / 160  
 And bad oure housbondes for to loue vs wel  
 Al þis sentence me likith euery del  
 ¶ vp start' þe pardoner and þat' anoon  
 Now dame quod he by god and by seint Iohn 164  
 ȝe ben a noble prechour in þis caas  
 I was aboute to wedde a wif' allaas  
 what' schal I buy it' on my fleisch so deere  
 ȝit' had I leuer wedde no wif' to ȝere 168

## GROUP D. § 1. WIFE'S PREAMBLE. Harleian 7334. 199

Abyd quod sche my tale is not bygonne /  
 Nay þou schalt drinke of anoper tonne  
 Er þat I go schal sauere wors þan ale  
 And whan þat I haue told þe forþ my tale 172  
 Of tribulacioun in mariage  
 I which I am expert/ in al myn age  
 This is to say my self hap ben þe whippe  
 Than might þou chese whepir þou wilt sippe 176  
 Of þilke tonne þat I schal abroche  
 Be war of it er þou to neigh approche  
 For I schal telle ensamples mo þan ten  
 who-so þat nyl be war by oper men 180  
 By him schal oper men corrected be  
 The same wordes writes protholome  
 Rede in his almagest and tak it þere [eaſ 89]  
 Dame I wold pray 3ow. if þat 3oure wille were 184  
 Sayde þis pardoner as 3e bigan  
 Tel forth 3oure tale sparith for no man  
 Teche vs 3onge men of 3oure practike  
 Gladly quod sche syns it may 3ow like 188  
 But þat I pray to al þis companye /  
 If þat I speke after my fantasie  
 As takeþ nouȝt agreef of þat I say  
 For myn entente is nought but/ to play / ¶ Narrat 192  
**N**ow sires now wol I telle forth my tale  
 As euer mote I drinke wyn or ale  
 I schal say soþ of housbondes þat I hadde  
 As þre of hem were goode and tuo were badde 196  
 Tuo of hem were goode riche and olde  
 Vnnethes mighte þay þe statute holde  
 In which þat þay were bounden vnto me  
 3e wot wel what I mene of þis par de 200  
 As help me god I laugh whan þat I pinke  
 how pitously on night I made hem swynke /  
 But by my fay I told of it no stoor  
 Thay had me ȝiue her lond and her tresor 204

Me nedith not' no lenger doon diligence  
 To wynne her loue or doon hem reuerence  
 Thay loued me so wel by god aboue  
 That' I tolde no deynte of' her loue 208  
 A wys womman wol bysi hir euer in oon  
 To gete hir loue þere sche hath noon  
 But' synnes I had hem holly in myn hond  
 And synnes þay had me ȝeuen al her lond 212  
 what' schuld I take keep hem for to please  
 But' it' were for my profyt' and myn ease /  
 I sette hem so on werke by my fay  
 That' many a night' þay songen weylaway 216  
 The bacoun was nought' fet' for hem I trowe  
 That' som men fecche in Essex an donmowe  
 I gouerned hem so wel after my lawe  
 That' ech of' hem ful blisful was and fawe 220  
 To bringe me gaye þinges fro þe faire [leaf 89, back]  
 þay were ful glad whan I spak' to hem faire  
 For god it woot' I chidde hem spitously  
 Now herkenep' how I bar me proprely 224  
 ȝe wise wyues þat' can vnderstonde  
 þus scholde ȝe speke and bere hem wrong' on honde  
 For half' so boldely can þer no man  
 Swere and lye as can a womman 228  
 I say not' by wyues þat' ben wise  
 But if it' be whan þay ben mysauise  
 I-wis a wif' if' þat' sche can hir good  
 schal beren him on hond þe cow is wood 232  
 And take witnes on hir oughne mayde /  
 Of hire assent/. but' herkenip' how I sayde  
 See olde Caynard is þis þin array  
 why is my neghebores wif' so gay 236  
 Sche is honoured ouer al þer sche goth  
 I sitte at hom I haue no thrifty cloth /  
 what' dostow at' my neighebores hous  
 Is sche so fair. what' artow amorous 240



what' rounne 3e wip hir maydenes benedicite  
 Sir olde lecchour let' pi iapes be  
 And if' I haue a gossib or a frend  
 wipouten gilt' pou chidest' as a fend 244  
 If' pat' I walk' and play vnto his hous  
 pou comest' hom as dronken as a mous  
 And prehist' on þy bench wip euel pree.  
 pou saist' to me it is a gret' meschief' 248  
 To wedde a pouer womman for costage /  
 And if' pat' sche be riche and of parage  
 Thanne saist' pou it/ is a tormentrie  
 To suffre hir pride and hir malencolie 252  
 And if' pat' sche be fair pou verray knaue  
 pou saist' pat' euery holour wol hir haue  
 Sche may no while in chastite abyde  
 That' is assayled þus on eche syde 256  
 pou saist' pat' som folk' desire vs for riches  
 Som for our schap and som for our fairnes  
 And some for pat' sche can synge and daunce [leaf 90]  
 And some for gentillesse or daliaunce 260  
 Som for hir handes and hir armes smale /  
 Thus goth al to þe deuel by pi tale  
 Thou saist' men may nought' kepe a castel wal  
 Hit' may so be biseged ouer al 264  
 And if' sche be foul. þanne pou saist' pat' sche  
 Coueitith euery man pat' sche may se /  
 For as a spaynel sche wol on him lepe  
 Til pat' sche fynde som man hire to chepe 268  
 Ne noon so gray a goos goþ in þe lake /  
 As sayest' pou. wol be wipouten make /  
 And saist' it is an hard þing' for to wolde  
 Thing' pat' no man wol. his willes holde 272  
 Thus seistow lorel whan pou gost' to bedde  
 And pat' no wys man nedith for to wedde /  
 Ne no man pat' entendip vnto heuene  
 wip wilde þunder dynt and fuyry leuene 276

Mote þi wicked necke be tobroke /  
 þou saist þat droppynge hous and eek smoke /  
 And chydyng wyues maken men to fle  
 Out of here oughne hous a benedicite 280  
 what eylith such an old man for to chyde /  
 þou seist we wyues woln oure vices hide /  
 Til we ben weddid and þan we wil hem schewe  
 wel may þat be a prouerbe of a schrewe 284  
 Thou saist þat assen . oxen and houndes  
 þay ben assayed at diuers stoundes  
 Basyns lauours eek er men hem bye  
 Spones . stooles . and al such housbondrie 288  
 Also pottes clopes and array  
 But folk of wyues maken non assay  
 Til þay ben weddid olde dotard schrewe .  
 And þanne saistow we woln oure vices schewe 292  
 þou saist also þat it displesith me  
 But if þat þou wilt praysen my beaute  
 And but þou pore alway in my face  
 And clepe me faire dame in euery place 296  
 And but þou make a fest on þilke day : [leaf 90, back]  
 þat I was born and make me freisch and gay  
 And but þou do my norice honoure  
 And to my chamberer wipinne þy boure 300  
 And to my fadres folk and myn allies  
 Thus saistow olde barel ful of lies  
 And ȝit of oure apprentys Iankyn  
 For his crisp her schynnyng as gold so fyn 304  
 And for he squiereþ me vp and doun  
 Ȝet hastow caught a fals suspeccioun  
 I nyl him nought þough þou were deed to morwe  
 But tel me wher-for hydestow wiþ sorwe 308  
 Thy keyes of þy chist a-way fro me  
 It is my good as wel as þin par de  
 ¶ what wenest þou make an ydiot of oure dame  
 Now by þat lord þat cleped is scint Iame 312

Thow schalt not bothe þough þou were wood  
 Be maister of my body and of my good  
 That oon þou schalt for-go maugre þin yen  
 what helpeth it on me tenqueren or espien 316  
 I trowe þou woldest lokke me in þy chest  
 Thou scholdist say. wif go wher þe lest  
 Take þoure disport I nyl lieue no talis  
 I know þow for a trewe wif dame alis 320  
 we louep no man þat takith keep or charge  
 wher þat we goon. we loue to be at large  
 ¶ Of alle men I-blessed most he be  
 þe wise astrologe daun protholome 324  
 That saith þis prouerbe. in his almagest  
 Of alle men his wisdom is highest  
 þat rekkith not who hap þe world in honde  
 By þis prouerbe. þou schalt vnderstonde / 328  
 Have þou ynough what þar þe recch or care  
 How merily þat oper folkes fare  
 For certes olde dotard wip þour leue  
 þe schul haue queynte right ynough at eue 332  
 he is to gret a nygard þat wol werne ¶ nota  
 A man to light a candel at his lanterne  
 he schal haue neuer þe lasse light par de [leaf 91]  
 Haue þou ynough þe thar not playne þe ¶ nota 336  
 Thou saist also þat if we make vs gay  
 with cloping and with precious array  
 þat it is peril of our chastite  
 And ȝit wip sorwe þou most enforce þe 340  
 And say þese wordes in thapostles name  
 In abytt maad wip chastite and schame  
 þe wommen schuld apparayl þow quod he /  
 And nought wip tressed her. and gay perre / 344  
 As perles ne with golden clopis riche  
 After þy text ne after þin rubriche  
 I wol nouȝt wirche as moche as a gnat  
 Thow saist þus þat I was lik a cat 348

But who-so wolde senge the cattes skyn  
 Than wold þe catte . duellen in his In  
 And if þe cattes skyn be slyk and gay  
 Sche wol not duelle in house half a day 352  
 But forth sche wil er eny day be dawet  
 To schewe hir skyn and goon a caterwrawet  
 This is to say if I be gay sir schrewe /  
 I wol renne aboute my borel for to schewe 356  
 Sir olde fool what helpith þe to asprien  
 þough þou praydest argus wip his hundrid yen  
 To be my warde corps as he can best  
 In faith he schuld not kepe me but if me lest 360  
 3it coupe I make his berd þough queynte he be  
 þou saydest eek þat þer ben þinges þre/  
 The whiche þinges troublen al þis erþe  
 And þat no wight may endure þe ferþe 364  
 O leue sire schrewe iñu schorte þy lif  
 3it prechestow and saist an hateful wif  
 I-rekened is for oon of þese meschaunces  
 Ben þer noon oper of þy ressemblaunces 368  
 þat 3e may liken 3oure parables vnto  
 But if a cely wyf be oon of þo  
 Thow likenest wommannes loue to helle  
 To bareyn lond þer water may not duelle 372  
 Thou likenest it/ also to wilde fuyr [leaf 91, back]  
 The more it brenneth þe more it hap desir  
 To consume eucry þing þat brent wol be  
 Thou saist right as wormes schenden a tre 376  
 Right so a wif schendith hir housebonde  
 This knowen þo þat ben to wyues bonde  
 lordynges right þus as 3e han vnderstonde  
 Bar I styf myn housebondes on honde 380  
 þat þus þay sayde in her dronkenesse  
 And al was fals but þat I took witnesse  
 On Iankyn and vpon my nece also  
 O lord þe peyne I dede hem and þe wo 384

Ful gulteles by goddes swete pyne  
 For as an hors I coupe boþe bite and whyne  
 I coupe pleyne and ȝet I was in þe gilt  
 Or elles I hadde often tyme be spilt 388  
 who-so first comeþ to þe mylle first grynt  
 I pleynd first so was oure werre stynt/  
 Thay were ful glad to excuse hem ful blyue  
 Of þing þat þay neuer agilt in her lyue 392  
 And wenches wold I beren hem on honde  
 whan þat/ for seek þay might vnnethes stonde  
 ȝit tykeled I his herte for þat he  
 wende I had of him so gret/ chierete 396  
 I swor þat al my walkyng out a nyght  
 was for to aspie wenches þat he dight  
 vnder þat colour had I many a mirthe  
 For al such witte is ȝeuen vs of birthe 400  
 Deceipt wepyng. spynnyng. god haþ ȝiue  
 To wymmen kyndely whil þay may lyue  
 And þus of o thing I auaunte me /  
 And þende I had þe bet in ech degre 404  
 By sleight or fors or of som maner þing  
 As by continuel murmur or chidyng  
 Namly on bedde hadden þay meschaunce  
 Ther wold I chide and do hem no plesaunce 408  
 I wold no lenger in þe bed abyde /  
 If þat I felt his arm ouer my syde  
 Til he had maad his raunsoun vnto me [leaf 92]  
 Than wold I suffre him doon his nycete 412  
 And þerfor euery man þis tale telle  
 wyne who-so may for al is for to selle  
 wiþ empty hond men may noon haukes lure  
 For wynnyng wold I al his lust endure 416  
 And make me a feyned appetyt/  
 And ȝit in bacoun had I neuer delyt  
 That made me þat euer I wold hem chyde  
 For þough þe pope had seten hem bisyde 420

I nold not spare hem at her oughne bord  
 For by my troupe I quyt hem word for word  
 Als help me verray god omnipotent /  
 þough I right now schuld make my testament 424  
 I owe hem nought a word þat it nys quitte  
 I brought it so aboute by my witte  
 þat þay most zeue it vp as for þe best  
 Or ellis had we neuer ben in rest 428  
 For þough he loked as a grym lyoun  
 3it schuld he fayle of his conclusioun  
 Than wold I say. now goode leef tak keep  
 how mekly lokith wilkyn oure scheep 432  
 Com ner my spouse let me ba þy cheke  
 3e schulde be al pacient and meke  
 And haue a swete spiced consciens  
 Sippen 3e preche so of Iopes paciens 436  
 Suffreth alway syns 3e so wel can preche  
 And but 3e do certeyn we schul 3ow teche /  
 That it is fair to haue a wyf in pees  
 On of vs tuo mot bowe douteles 440  
 And sippen man is more resonable  
 Than womman is. 3e moste be suffrable  
 what aylith 3ow. þus for to grucche and grone  
 Is it for 3e wold haue my queynt allone / 444  
 why tak it al. lo haue it euery del  
 Peter I schrewe 3ow but 3e loue it wel  
 For if I wolde selle my bele chose /  
 I coupe walk as freisch as eny rose 448  
 But I wol kepe it for 3oure owne toth [leaf 92, back]  
 3e ben to blame by god I say 3ow soth /  
 Such maner wordes hadde we on honde  
 Now wol I speke of my fourth housbonde / 452  
 My fourþe housbond was a reuelour  
 This is to say he had a paramour  
 I was 3ong and ful of ragerie  
 Stiborn and strong and ioly as a pye 456

how coupe I daunce to an harpe smale  
 And synge y-wys as eny nightyngale  
 whan I had dronke a draught of swete wyn  
 Metillius þe foule cherl þe swyn 460  
 That with a staf byraft his wyf hir lyf  
 For sche drank wyn þough I had ben his wif  
 Ne schuld nouȝt haue daunted me fro drink  
 And after wyn on venus most I þink 464  
 For also siker as cold engendrith hayl  
 A likorous mouth most haue a licorous tail  
 In wymmen vinolent is no defens  
 This knowen lecchours by experiens 468  
 But lord crist whan þat it remembrith me  
 vpon my ȝouthe and on my iolite  
 It tikelith me aboute myn herte roote  
 Vnto þis day it doþ myn herte boote 472  
 That I haue had my world as in my tyme  
 But age alas þat al wol enuenyme  
 Hap me hireft my beaute and my pith  
 Let go far wel. þe deuyl go þer wip 476  
 The flour is goon þer nis no more to telle  
 The bran as I best can now mot I selle  
 But ȝit to be mery wol I fonde /  
 Now wol I telle of my fourt housbonde 480  
 I say I had in herte gret despyt  
 That he of eny oþer had delit  
 But he was quit/ by god and by seint Ioce  
 I made him of þe same woode a croce 484  
 Nought of my body in no foul manere  
 But certeynly I made folk such chere  
 That in his owne grees I made him frie [leaf 93]  
 For anger and for ialousie 488  
 By god in erþe I was his purgatory  
 For which I hope his soule be in glory  
 For god it wot. he sat ful stille and song  
 whan þat his scho ful bitterly him wrong 492

Ther was no wight sauf god and he þat wist/  
 In many wyse how sore I him twist  
 I sayde whan I cam fro Ierusalem  
 And lith I-graue vnder þe roode bem 496  
 Al is his tombe nought so curious  
 As was þe sepulcre of him Darius  
 which þat appellus wrought so subtilly  
 It nys but wast to burie him preciously 500  
 let him far wel god ȝiue his soule rest  
 he is now in his graue and in his chest  
 ¶ Now of my fifte housbond wol I telle /  
 God let his soule neuer come in helle / 504  
 And ȝit was he to me þe moste schrewe /  
 That fele I on my ribbes alle on rewe /  
 And euer schal vnto myn endyng day  
 But in oure bed he was so freisch and gay 508  
 And þer with al so wel he coupe me glose /  
 whan þat he wolde haue my bele chose /  
 That þough he had me bete on euery boon  
 he coupe wyne my loue right anoon 512  
 I trowe I loued him beste for þat he  
 was of his loue daungerous to me  
 we wymmen han if þat I schal nouȝt lye  
 In þis matier a queynte fantasie 516  
 wayte what þyng we may not lightly haue  
 Ther after wol we sonnest crie and craue  
 Forbeed vs þing and þat desire we  
 Pres on vs fast and þanne wol we fle 520  
 wiþ daunger outen alle we oure ware  
 Greet pres at market makith deer chaffare  
 And to greet chep is holden at litel pris  
 This knowith euery womman þat is wys 524  
 My fyfte housbond god his soule blesse [leaf 93, back]  
 which þat I took for loue and no richesse /  
 he somtyme was a clerk of Oxenford  
 And had left scole and went at hoom to borde 528



wiþ my gossib duellyng<sup>t</sup> in oure toun  
 God haue hir soule . hir name was Alisoun  
 Sche knew myn herte and my priuite  
 Bet þan oure parissh prest<sup>t</sup> so mot<sup>t</sup> I the / 532  
 To hir bywreyed I my counseil al  
 For had myn housbond pissed on a wal  
 Or don a þing<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> schuld haue cost<sup>t</sup> his lif<sup>t</sup>  
 To hir and to anoper worpy wyf<sup>t</sup> 536  
 And to my neece which I loued wel  
 I wold haue told his counseil euery del  
 And so I did ful ofte god it woot  
 That<sup>t</sup> made his face ofte reed and hoot 540  
 For verry schame . and blamyd himself<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he /  
 had told to me so gret<sup>t</sup> a priuete  
 And so byfel þat<sup>t</sup> oones in a lent<sup>t</sup>  
 So ofte tyme to my gossib I went<sup>t</sup> 544  
 For euer ȝit<sup>t</sup> I loued to be gay  
 And for to walk<sup>t</sup> in march aueril and may  
 From hous to here sondry talis  
 þat<sup>t</sup> Iankyn Clerk<sup>t</sup> and my gossib dame alis 548  
 And I my self<sup>t</sup> in to þe feldes went<sup>t</sup>  
 Myn housbond was at<sup>t</sup> londone al þat<sup>t</sup> lent  
 I had þe bettir leysir for to pleye  
 And for to see and eek<sup>t</sup> for to be seye 552  
 Of lusty folk<sup>t</sup> . what<sup>t</sup> wist<sup>t</sup> I wher my *grace*  
 was schapen for to be or in what<sup>t</sup> place  
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns  
 To vigiles and to processiouns 556  
 To prechings eek<sup>t</sup> and to þis pilgrimages  
 To pleyes miracles and mariages  
 And wered vpon my scarlet<sup>t</sup> gytes  
 þese wormes þese moughtes ne þese mytes 560  
 Vpon my perel fretith hem neuer a deel  
 And wostow why . for þay were vsed wel  
 Now wol I telle forþ what happid me [leaf 94]  
 I say þat<sup>t</sup> in þe feldes walkid we 564

Til trewely we had such daliaunce  
This Clerk and I þat of my puruyaunce  
I spak to him and sayde how þat he  
If I were wydow schulde wedde me 568  
For certeynly I say for no bobaunce  
3it was I neuer wipouten purueyaunce  
Of mariage ne of no þinges eeke  
I hold a mouses hert not worþ a leek 572  
That hap but oon hole to sterte to  
And if þat faile þan is al I-do  
[ . . . . .  
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. . . . . no gap in the MS.] 584  
But now sir let me se what I schal sayn  
A ha by god I haue my tale agayn  
¶ whan þat my fourþe housbond was on bere  
I wept algate and made a sory cheere 588  
As wyues mooten for it is vsage  
And with my kerchief couered my visage  
But for þat I was purueyed of a make /  
I wept but smal and þat I vndertake 592  
To chirche was myn housbond brought on morwe  
with neighebers þat for him made sorwe  
And Iankyn oure clerk was oon of þo  
As help me god whan þat I saugh him go 596  
After þe beere me þought he had a paire  
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire  
That al myn hert I 3af vnto his hold  
He was I trowe twenty wynter old 600

And I was fourty I schal say þe sothe  
But 3it I had alway a Coltis tope  
Gattothid I was and þat bycom me wel  
I had þe prynte of seynt Venus sel 604  
[ . . . . .  
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. . . . . no gap in the MS.] 612  
Myn ascent was taur. and mars þer inne /  
Allas alas þat euer loue was synne  
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun  
By vertu of my constillacioun 616  
That made me þat I couþe nouȝt wiþdrawe /  
My chambre of venus from a good felawe /  
[ . . . . .  
. . . . . 620  
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. . . . .  
. . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
what schuld I say but at þe monthis ende [leaf 94, back]  
This ioly clerk Iankyn þat was so heende 628  
Hap weddid me with gret solempnitee  
And to him 3af I al þe londe and fee  
That euer was me 3iue þer bifore  
But aftirward repented me ful sore 632  
he nolde suffre noþing of my list  
By god he smot me oones wiþ his fist  
For I rent oones out of his book a lef  
That of þat strok myn eere wax al deaf 636

Styborn I was as is a leones  
 And of my tonge a verray iangleres  
 And walk' I wold as I had don biforn  
 Fro hous to hous al þough he had it sworn 640  
 For which he ofte tyme wolde preche  
 And me of olde Romain gestes teche /  
 How he Simplicius gallus left' his wyf'  
 And hir forsok' for terme of al his lyf' 644  
 Nought' but' for open heedid he hir say  
 lokyng' out' at' his dore vpon a day  
 Anoper Romain told he me by name  
 That' for his wyf' was at' a somer game 648  
 wipout' his wityng'. he forsok' hir eeke  
 And þanne wold he vpon his book' seeke  
 That' ilke prouerbe of Ecclesiaste  
 wher he comaundith and forbedith faste 652  
 Man schal not' suffre. his wyf' go roule aboute /  
 Than wold he say right' þus wipouten doute  
 ¶ Who þat' buyldith his hous al of salwes  
 And priketh his blynde hors ouer the falwes 656  
 And suffrith his wyf'. to go seken halwes  
 Is worpy to ben honged on þe galwes  
 But' al for nought' I sette nought' an hawe  
 Of his prouerbe. ne of his olde sawe 660  
 Ne I wolde not' of him corrected be  
 I hate him þat' my vices tellith me.  
 And so doon mo. god it' wot' þan I.  
 This made him wip me wood al outerly 664  
 I nolde not' forbere him in no cas [leaf 95]  
 Now wol I say 3ow soth by seint' Nicholas  
 why þat' I rent' out' of þe book' a leef'  
 For which he smot' me þat' I was al def' 668  
 he had a book' þat' gladly night' and day  
 For his desport' he wolde rede alway  
 he clepyd it' Valelye and theofrast'  
 At' which book' he lough alway ful fast' 672

And eek' þay say þer was som tyme at Rome  
 A clerk' a Cardynal þat' heet seint Ierome  
 That' made a book' azens Iouynyan  
 In which book' eeke þer was terculan 676  
 Crisippus tortula and eek' helewys  
 That' was abbas not' fer fro paris  
 And eek' þe parablis of' Salamon  
 Ouydes art' and bourdes many oon 680  
 And alle þese were bounde in oo volume  
 And euery night' and day was his custume  
 whan he had leysir and vacacioun  
 From oþer worldes occupacioun 684  
 To reden in þis book' of' wikked wyues  
 he knew of' hem mo legendes and lyues  
 þan ben of' goode wyues in þe bible  
 For trustith wel it is an impossible 688  
 That' any clerk' schal speke good of' wyues  
 But' if' it' be of' holy seintes lyues  
 Ne of' noon oþer wyfes neuer þe mo  
 who peyntid þe leoun tel me who 692  
 By god if' wommen hadde writen stories  
 As clerkes haue wipinne her oratories  
 Thay wold' haue write of' men more wickidnes  
 Than al þe mark' of' Adam may redres 696  
 These children of' mercury and of' venus  
 Ben in her werkyng' ful contrarius  
 Mercury louith wisdom and science  
 And venus loueth ryot' and dispense 700  
 And for her diuers disposicioun  
 Ech fallith in oþeres exaltacioun  
 And þus god wot' mercury is desolate [leaf 96, back]  
 In pisses wher venus is exaltate 704  
 And venus faylith wher Mercury is reysed  
 Therfor no womman of' clerkes is preised  
 The clerk' whan he is old and may nouȝt do  
 Of' venus werkis is not' worþ a scho 708

Than sit he doun and writ in his dotage  
That wommen can nought kepe here mariage  
But now to purpos why I tolde þe  
That I was beten for a leef par de 712  
vpon a night Iankyn þat was oure sire  
Rad on his book as he sat by þe fyre  
Of Eua first þat for hir wikkidnes  
was al mankynde brought to wrecchednes 716  
[ . . . . .  
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. . . . .  
. . . . . no gap in the MS.] 720  
Tho rad he me how Sampson left his heris  
Slepyng his lemman kut it wip hir scheris  
Thurgh which tresoun lost he boþe his yen  
Tho rad he me if þat I schal not lyen 724  
Of Ercules and of his deianyre  
That caused him to sette himself on fuyre  
No þing forȝat he þe care and wo  
þat Socrates had wip his wyues tuo 728  
How exantipa cast piſse vpon his heed  
þis seely man sat stille as he were deed  
he wyped his heed no more durst he sayn  
But er þunder stynte þer comeþ rayn 732  
Of phasipha þat was þe queen Creete .  
For schrewednes him þought þe tale sweete .  
Fy spek no more it is a grisly þing  
For her horribil lust and her likyng 736  
Of Clydemystra for hir leccherie  
That falsly made hir housbond for to dye  
he rad it with ful good deuocioun  
he told me eek for what occasioun 740  
Amphiores at Thebes left his lif  
Myn housbond had a legend of his lyf  
Exiphilem þat for an ouche of gold  
hap prively vnto þe Grekes told 744

wher þat hir housbond hyd him in a place [leaf 96]  
 For which he had at thebes sory grace  
 Of lyma told he me and of lucye  
 Thay boþe made her housbondes for to dye / 748  
 That oon for loue · þat' oþer was for hate  
 Lyma hir housbond on an euen late  
 Empoysond hath . for þat' sche was his fo  
 Lucia licorous loued hir housbond so 752  
 For þat' he schuld alway vpon hir þink'  
 Sche ȝaf' him such a maner loue-drink'  
 That' he was deed er it was by þe morwe  
 And þus algates housbondes had sorwe 756  
 Than told he me how oon latumyus  
 Compleigned vnto his felaw arrius  
 That' in his gardyn growed such a tre  
 On which he sayde how þat' his wyues þre / 760  
 Honged hem selfe / for herte despitous  
 O leue broþer . quod þis arrious  
 ȝif' me a plont' of þilke blessid tre  
 And in my gardyn schal it' plantid be 764  
 Of latter date of wyues hap he red  
 That' som han slayn her housbondes in her bed  
 And let' her lecchour dighten al þe night'  
 whil þat þe corps lay in þe flor vpright' 768  
 And som han dryuen nayles in her brayn  
 whiles þay sleepe and þus þey han hem slayn  
 Som haue hem ȝiue poyson in her drink'  
 he spak' more harm þan herte may byþynk' 772  
 And þer wiþ al he knew mo prouerbes  
 þan in þis world þer growen gres or herbes  
 Better is quod he thyn habitacioun  
 Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun 776  
 Than with a womman vsyng' for to chyde  
 Better is quod he hihe in þe roof' abyde  
 Than wiþ a wikked womman down in a hous  
 Thay ben so wicked and so contrarious 780

þay haten þat her housbondes louen ay  
 He sayd a womman cast' hir schame away  
 whan sche cast' of' hir smok'. and forþer mo [leaf 96, back]  
 A fair womman but' sche be chast' also 784  
 Is lyk' a gold ryng' in a sowes nose  
 who wolde wene or who wolde suppose /  
 The wo þat' in myn herte was and pyne  
 And whan I saugh he nolde neuer fyne 788  
 To reden on þis cursed book' al night  
 And sodeinly þre leues haue I plight  
 Out' of' þis booke þat' he had and eeke  
 I with my fist' so took' him on þe cheeke 792  
 That' in oure fuyr he fel bakward adoun.  
 And he vpstert' as dop a wood leoun  
 And wip his fist' he smot' me on þe hed  
 That' in þe floor I lay as I were deed 796  
 And whan he saugh so stille þat' I lay  
 he was agast' and wold haue fled away  
 Til atte last' out' of' my swown I brayde  
 O hastow slayn me false þef' I sayde 800  
 And for my lond þus hastow mourdrid me  
 Er I be deed 3it wol I kisse þe  
 And ner he cam and knelith faire a doun  
 And sayde deere suster alisoun 804  
 As help me god I schal þe neuer smyte  
 That' I haue doon it is þiself' to wite /  
 Forȝiue it' me and þat' I þe biseke  
 And 3et' eft' sones I hyt' him on þe cheke 808  
 And sayde þef' þus mekil I me wreke  
 Now wol I dye I may no lenger speke  
 But' atte last' wip mochil care and wo  
 we fyl accordid by our seluen tuo 812  
 he 3af' me al þe bridil in myn hand  
 To haue þe gouernaunce of' hous and land  
 And of' his tonge and of' his hond also /  
 And made him brenne his book' anoon right' þo 816



And whan I hadde geten vnto me  
 By maistry al þe souereynete  
 And þat he sayde myn owne trewe wif  
 Do as þe list in term of al þy lif 820  
 kepe þyn honour and kep eek myn estat [leaf 97]  
 And after þat day we neuer had debat  
 God help me so I was to him as kynde  
 As eny wyf fro Denmark vnto Inde 824  
 And also trewe was he vnto me  
 I pray to god þat sitte in mageste  
 So blesse his soule for his mercy deere  
 Now wol I say my tale if 3e wol heere 828

[No gap in the MS.]

[The Wrangle between the Summoner and Friar.]

¶ The Frere lough when he had herd al þis  
 Now dame quod he so haue I ioye or blis  
 This is a long preambel<sup>1</sup> of a tale ¶ Here makith þe  
 And whan þe Sompnour herd þe frere gale 832 frere an interpre-  
 Lo quod þe sompnour for goddes armes tuo tacion of þe wyfes  
 A frer wol entremet him euermo tale /  
 lo goode men a flie and eek a frere [1 or parambel]  
 woln falle in euery dissche and matiere 836  
 what spekst þou of. perambulacioun  
 what ambil. or trot. or pees or go sit doun  
 Thou lettest oure disport in þis matere  
 3e woltow so sir sompnour quod þe frere 840  
 Now by my fay I schal er þat I go  
 Telle of a sompnour such a tale or tuo  
 That alle þe folk / schuln laughen in þis place /  
 Now ellis frere I byschrew þy face 844  
 Quod þis Sompnour and I byschrewe me  
 But / if I telle tales tuo or þre  
 Of freres er I come to Sydingborne  
 þat I schal make þin herte for to morne 848

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218 GROUP D. § 1. WIFE'S PREAMBLE. Harleian 7334.

For wel I wot þy paciens is goon

Oure hoste cride pees and þat anoon

And sayde let þe womman telle hir tale /

þe fare as folkes þat dronken ben of ale 852

Do dame tel forth þour tale and þat is best/

Al redy sir quod sche right as þou lest/

If I haue licence of þis worthy frere

þis dame quod he tel forþ and I schal heere 856

*[Break of two lines in the MS.]*

[leaf 97, back]

<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>N olde dayes of þe kyng<sup>t</sup> arthour          Of which þat<sup>t</sup> britouns speken gret<sup>t</sup> honour          Al was þis lond fulfilled of fayrie          The elf<sup>t</sup> queen wiþ hir ioly compaignye          Daunced fuloft<sup>t</sup> in many a grene mede          This was þe old oppynyoun as I rede          I speke of many hundrid ȝer ago          But<sup>t</sup> now can no man see noon elues mo          For now þe gréte charite and prayeres          Of lymytours and oper holy freres          That<sup>t</sup> sechen euery lond and euery streem          As thik<sup>t</sup> as motis in þe sonne beem          Blessynge halles. chambres. kichenes. boures          Citees. burghes. castels. hihe and toures.          Thropes. bernes. schepnes. and dayeries          That<sup>t</sup> makith þat<sup>t</sup> þer ben no fayeries          For þer as wont<sup>t</sup> was to walken an elf<sup>t</sup>          Ther walkith noon. but<sup>t</sup> þe lymytour himself<sup>t</sup>          In vndermeles and in morwenynges          And saith his matyns and his holy þinges          As he goþ in his lymytacioun          wommen may go saufly vp and doun          In euery bussch or vnder euery tre          þer is non oper incumbent<sup>t</sup> but/ he /          And ne wol but<sup>t</sup> doon hem dishonour          And so bifel it / þat<sup>t</sup> þis king<sup>t</sup> arthour          had in his hous a lusty bachelor          That<sup>t</sup> on a day com rydyng<sup>t</sup> fro ryuer</p>	<p>¶ Narrat</p> <p>860</p> <p>864</p> <p>868</p> <p>872</p> <p>876</p> <p>880</p> <p>884</p>
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And happed al alone as sche was born  
 he saugh a mayde walkyng<sup>t</sup> him byforn  
 Of which mayden anoón maugre hir heed  
 By verray fors byraft<sup>t</sup> hir maydenhed 888  
 For such oppressioun was such clamour  
 And such pursuyte vnto kyng<sup>t</sup> arthour  
 That dampned was þe knight<sup>t</sup> and schuld be ded  
 By cours of<sup>t</sup> lawe and schuld haue lost<sup>t</sup> his heed 892  
 Parauenture such was þe statut þo  
 But þat þe queen and oþer ladys mo  
 So longe preyeden þay þe kyng<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> grace [leaf 98]  
 Til he his lif<sup>t</sup> hap graunted in þe place 896  
 And ȝaf him to þe queen al at<sup>t</sup> hir wille  
 To chese wethir sche wolde him saue or spille  
 The queen thanked þe kyng<sup>t</sup> wip al hir might<sup>t</sup>  
 And after þus sche spak<sup>t</sup> vnto þe knight<sup>t</sup> 900  
 whan þat sche saugh hir tyme vpon a day  
 Thow stondest ȝet<sup>t</sup> quod he in such array  
 þat of þy lyf<sup>t</sup> hastow no scwerte  
 I graunte þy lif<sup>t</sup> if þou canst<sup>t</sup> telle me 904  
 what þing<sup>t</sup> is it þat women most<sup>t</sup> desiren  
 Be war and keep þy nek<sup>t</sup> bon fro þe Iren  
 And if þou canst<sup>t</sup> not tellen it<sup>t</sup> anoón  
 ȝet<sup>t</sup> wol I ȝiue þe leue for to goon 908  
 A twelf<sup>t</sup> month and a day it<sup>t</sup> for to lere  
 An answar suffisaunt<sup>t</sup> in þis matiere  
 And seurte wol I haue er þat þou pace  
 Thy body for to ȝelden in þis place 912  
 wo was þis knight<sup>t</sup> and sorwfully he siked  
 But what<sup>t</sup>. he may not<sup>t</sup> doon al as him liked  
 And atte last<sup>t</sup> he ches him for to wende  
 And cam aȝein right<sup>t</sup> at<sup>t</sup> þe ȝeres ende 916  
 wip swich answer as god him wolde purueye  
 And takith his leue and wendith forþ his weye  
 He sekith euery hous and euery place  
 wher-so he hopith for to fynde grace 920

To lerne what þing' wommen louen most  
 But he ne couþe arryuen in no cost'  
 wher as he mighte fynde þis matiere  
 To þese þinges accordyng' in fere 924  
 Somme sayden womme louen best' richesse  
 Somme sayde honour and some sayde iolynesse  
 Somme sayde riche array some sayden lust' on bedde  
 And ofte tyme to be wydow and wedde 928  
 Somme sayden oure herte is most' I-eased  
 whan we ben y-flaterid and y-pleased  
 He goþ ful neigh þe soth I wil not lye  
 A man schal wyne vs best' wip flaterye 932  
 And with attendaunce and busynesse [leaf 98, back]  
 Ben we y-limed boþe more and lesse /  
 And somme sayen þat' we louen best'  
 For to be fre and to doon as vs lest' 936  
 And þat' no man repreue vs of' oure vice  
 But' say þat' we ben wys and no þing' nyce  
 For trewely þer is noon of' vs alle  
 If' eny wight' wold claw vs on þe galle / 940  
 That' we nyl like for he saith vs soþ  
 Assay and he schal fynd it' þat' so doþ  
 For be we neuer so vicious wipinne  
 we schuln be holde wys and clene of' synne 944  
 And somme sayn þat' gret' delit' han we  
 For to be holden stabil and secre /  
 And in oon purpos stedfastly to duelle /  
 And nought' bywreye þing' þat' men vs telle / 948  
 But' þat' tale is not'. worth a rakes stele  
 Par dy we wymmen. can right' no þing' hele  
 witnes on myda wil 3e here þe tale /  
 Ouyd among' his oper þinges smale 952  
 Sayde Myda had. vnder his lange heris  
 Growyng' vpon his heed tuo asses eeris  
 The whiche vice he hid as he best' might  
 Ful subtilly fro euery mannes sight 956

That saue his wyf þer wist of þat no mo  
 he loued hir most. and trusted hir also /  
 he prayed hir. þat to no creature  
 sche schulde tellen. of his disfigure / 960  
 Sche swor him nay for al þis world to wynne  
 Sche nolde do þat vilony or synne  
 To make hir housbond haue so foul a name  
 Sche wold not tel it for hir oughne schame 964  
 But natheles hir þoughte þat sche dyde  
 That sche so long a counseil scholde hyde  
 hir þought it swal. so sore about / hir hert  
 That needely som word hir most astert 968  
 And sins sche dorst not tel it vn-to man  
 Doun to a marreys faste by sche ran  
 Til sche cam þer hir herte was on fuyre [leaf 99]  
 And as a bytoure bumblith in þe myre 972  
 Sche layd hir mouth vnto þe water doun  
 Bywrey me not þou watir with þi soun  
 Quod sche to þe I telle it and no mo  
 Myn housbond hap long asse eeris tuo 976  
 Now is myn hert al hool now is it oute  
 I might no lenger kepe it out of doute  
 Her may 3e se þeigh we a tyme abyde  
 3et out it moot we can no counseil hyde 980  
 The remenaunt of þe tale if 3e wil here /  
 Redith ovid. and þer 3e mow it leere  
 ¶ This knight of which my tale is specially  
 whan þat he saugh he might nouȝt come þerby 984  
 This is to say what wommen louen most  
 wiþinne his brest ful sorwful was þe gost/  
 But hom he goþ. he might no lenger soioune  
 The day was come þat homward most he torne 988  
 And in his way it hapnyd him to ride  
 In al his care vnder a forest side  
 wher as he saugh vpon a daunce go  
 Of ladys four and twenty and 3it mo 992

Toward þis ilke daunce I drough ful ȝerne /  
 In hope þat som wisdom schuld I lerne /  
 But certeynly er I com fully þere  
 Vanysshid was þis daunce he nyste where / 996  
 No creature saugh he þat bar lif  
 Sauþ on þe greene he saugh sittynge a wyf /  
 A fouler wight þer may no man deuyse  
 Azens þe knight þis olde wyf gan ryse 1000  
 And sayder sir knight heer forth lith no way  
 Tel me what. ȝe seekyn by ȝour fay  
 Par aduenture. it may þe better be /  
 Thise olde folk can mochil þing quod sche 1004  
 My lieue modir quod þis knight certayn  
 I am but ded but if þat I can sayn  
 what þing is it. þat wommen most desire  
 Couþe ȝe me wisse. I wold wel quyt ȝour huyre / 1008  
 Plight me þy trouth. her in myn hond quod sche [1008, 22]  
 The nexte þing þat I require þe  
 Thou schalt it doo if it be in þy might  
 And I wol telle it þe er it be night 1012  
 haue her my troupe quod þe knight I graunte  
 Thanne quod sche I dar me wel anaunte  
 þy lif is sauþ for I wol stonde þer by  
 vpon my lif þe queen wol say as I 1016  
 let se which is þe proudest of hem alle  
 þat werith on a couerchief or a calle  
 þat dar say nay of þing I schal þe teche  
 let vs go forth wipouten more speche 1020  
 Tho rowned sche a pistil in his eere  
 And bad him to be glad and haue no fere  
 whan þay ben comen to þe court þis knight  
 Sayd he had holde. þat day þat he hight 1024  
 Al redy was his answer as he sayde  
 Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde  
 And many a wydow for þat þay ben wyse  
 The queen herself sittynge as a Iustise 1028

Assemblid ben his answer for to hie  
 And afterward þis knight was bode appiere  
 To euery wight comaundid was cilenche  
 And þat þe knight schuld telle in audience 1032  
 what þing þat worldly wommen louen best  
 ¶ þe knight ne stood not stille as doþ a best  
 But to þe questioun anon answerde  
 wiþ manly voys þat al the court it herde 1036  
 My liege lady generally quod he  
 wommen desiren to haue soueraynte  
 As wel ouer hir housbond as ouer hir loue  
 And for to be in maystry him aboue 1040  
 This is þe most desir þough 3e me kille /  
 Doþ as 3ow list I am heer at 3our wille  
 In al þe court ne was þer wyf ne mayde  
 Ne wydow þat contraried þat he sayde 1044  
 But sayden he. was worpy haue his lif  
 And wiþ þat word vp start þat olde wif  
 which þat þe knight saugh sitting on þe grene [leaf 100]  
 Mercy quod sche my soueraigne lady queene 1048  
 Er þat 3our court departe doþ me right  
 I taughte þis answer vnto þe knight  
 For which he plichte me his troupe there  
 The firste þing þat I wold him requere 1052  
 he wold it do if it lay in his might  
 Bifore þe court þen pray I þe sir knight  
 Quod sche þat þou me take vnto þy wif  
 For wel þou wost þat I haue kept þy lif 1056  
 If I say fals sey nay vpon þy fey  
 This knight answerd alas and waylawey  
 I wot right wel þat such was my byhest  
 For goddes loue as chese a ne request 1060  
 Tak al my good and let my body go  
 Nay quod sche þan I schrew vs boþe tuo  
 For þough þat I be foule old and poure  
 I nolde for al þe metal ne for þe ourc 1064



That vnder erthe is graue or lith aboue  
 But I þy wife. were and eek þy loue  
 My loue quod he. nay nay. my dampnacioun  
 Allas þat eny of my nacioun 1068  
 Schuld euer so foule disparagid be  
 But/ al for nought. þe ende is þis þat he  
 Constreigned was. he needes most hir wedde  
 And takith his wyf and goþ wip hir to bedde 1072  
 ¶ Now wolden som men say *par* aduventure  
 That for my neeglignce I do no cure  
 To telle 3ow þe ioie and tharray  
 That at þat fest was maad þat ilke day 1076  
 To which þing schortly answeren I schal  
 And say þer nas feste ne ioi at al  
 Ther nas but heuynes and mochil sorwe  
 For priuely he weddyd hir in a morwe 1080  
 And alday hude him. as dop an oule  
 So wo was him his wyf loked so foule  
 Gret was þe wo. þe knight had in his þought  
 whan he was with his wyf on bedde brought 1084  
 He walwith and he torneth to and fro [leaf 100, back]  
 his olde wyf lay smylyng euer mo  
 And sayd o deere housbond benedicite<sup>1</sup> [1 MS. bñdicitte]  
 Fareth eury knight wip his wyf as 3e / 1088  
 Is þis þe lawe of king arthures hous  
 Is eury knight of his þus daungerous  
 I am 3our oughne loue / and 3our wyf  
 I am sche þat hath sauýd 3our lyf 1092  
 And certes ne dede I 3ow neuer vnright  
 why fare 3e þus with me þe firste night  
 3e fare lik a man þat had left his wit/  
 what is my gult. for godes loue tel me it 1096  
 And it schal be amendid if þat I may  
 Amendid quod þis knight allas nay nay  
 It wol nought ben amendid neuer mo  
 Thow art so loply and so old also 1100

And þerto comen of so lowh a kynde  
 That litil wonder is þough I walwe and wynde  
 So wolde god myn herte wolde brest  
 Is þis quod sche þe cause of þour vnrest 1104  
 Ȝe certeynly quod he no wonder is  
 Now sire quod sche I couþe amende al þis  
 If þat me list er it were dayes þre /  
 So wel Ȝe mighte bere Ȝow to me 1108  
 But for Ȝe speken of such gentillesse  
 As is descendit out of old richesse  
 Therfor schuld Ȝe. ben holden gentil men  
 Such arrogaunce. is not worth an hen 1112  
 lok who þat is most vertuous alway  
 Priue and pert and most entendip ay  
 To do þe gentil dedes þat he can  
 Tak him for þe grettest gentil man 1116  
 Crist wol we clayme of him oure gentillesse  
 Nought of oure eldres for our gret richesse  
 For þough þey Ȝiue vs al her heritage  
 For which we clayme to be of high parage 1120  
 Ȝit may þay not biqueþe for no þing  
 To noon of vs so vertuous lyuyng  
 That made hem gentil men y-callid be [leaf 101]  
 And bad vs folwe hem in such degre 1124  
 wel can þe wyse poet of Florence  
 That hatte Daunt speke of þis sentence /  
 Lo in such maner of rym is Dauntes tale  
 Ful seeld vprisith by his braunchis smale / 1128  
 Prowes of man. for god of his prowesse  
 wol þat we clayme of him our gentillesse  
 For of our auncestres. we no þing clayme  
 But temporal þing þat men may hurt and mayme 1132  
 Ek euery wight wot þis as wel as I  
 If gentiles were plaunted naturelly  
 Vnto a certayn lignage doun þe line  
 Priue ne apert/. þay wolde neuer fine 1136

To don of gentilesce þe fair office  
 Thay might' nought' doon no vileny or vice  
 Tak' fuyr and ber it' in þe derkest' hous  
 Bitwixe þis. and þe mount Cankasous 1140  
 And let' men schit'. þe dores and go þenne  
 3it' wol þe fuyr as fair and lighte brenne  
 As twenty þousand men might' it' biholde  
 his office naturel ay wol it holde 1144  
 vp peril on my lif' til þat' it dye  
 her / may 3e se wel how þat genterye  
 Is nought' annexid to possessioun  
 Sithins folk' ne doon her operacioun 1148  
 Alway as doth þe fuyr lo in his kynde  
 For god it wot' men may ful often fynde  
 A lordes sone do schame and vilonye  
 And he þat' wol haue pris of' his gentrie 1152  
 For he was boren of' a gentil hous  
 And had his eldres noble and vertuons  
 And nyl himselue. doo no gentil dedis  
 Ne folw his gentil aunceter þat' deed is 1156  
 he is nought' gentil be he duk' or erl.  
 For vileyn synful deedes makeþ a cherl.  
 For gentilnesse nys but' renome  
 Of' þin auncestres for her heigh bounte 1160  
 which is a straunge þing' to þy persone [leaf 101, back]  
 Thy gentilesce comeþ fro god alloone  
 Than comþ oure verray gentilesse of' grace  
 It' was no þing' biquethe vs wip oure place 1164  
 Thinkeþ how nobil as saith valerius  
 was þilke tullius hostilius  
 That' out' of' pouert / ros to high noblesse  
 Redith Senek/. and redith eek/ Boece. 1168  
 Ther schuln 3e se expresse þat' no dred is  
 þat' he is gentil þat' doþ gentil dedis.  
 And þerfor lieue housbond I conclude  
 Al were it that' myn auncetres wer rude 1172

ȝit may þe highe god and so hope I  
 Graunte me grace to lyue vertuously  
 Than am I gentil whan þat I bygynne  
 To lyue vertuously and weyuen synne 1176  
 And þer as ȝe of povert me repreue  
 The heighe god on whom þat we bilieue  
 In wilful pouert ches to lese his lif  
 And certes euery man . mayden or wif 1180  
 May vnderstonde þat Ihesu heuen king  
 Ne wold not chese . a vicious lyuyng  
 Glad pouert is an honest þing certayn  
 This wol Senek and oþer clerkes sayn 1184  
 who þat holt him payd of his pouert  
 I hold him riche . al had he nouȝt a schert  
 he þat coueitith is a pore wight  
 For he wold haue þat is not in his might 1188  
 But he þat nouȝt hap . ne coueyteth nouȝt/ to haue  
 Is riche al þough ȝe hold him but a knaue  
 Verray pouert is synne proprely  
 Iuuenal saith of pouert merily 1192  
 ¶ The pore man whan he goþ by þe way  
 Bifore þe theues he may synge and play  
 Pouert is hateful and as I gesse /  
 A ful gret brynger out of busynesse / 1196  
 A gret amender eek of Sapiens  
 To him þat takith it in paciens  
 Pouert is þis al þough it seme elenge [leaf 102]  
 Possessioun þat no wight wil chalenge 1200  
 ∴ Pouert ful often whan a man is lowe  
 Makith him his god and eek himself/ to knowe  
 ∴ Pouert a spectacle is as þinkith me  
 þurgh which he may his verray frendes se 1204  
 And þerfor sir syth þat I ȝow nought greue  
 Of my pouert no more ȝe me repreue  
 // Now sir of elde ȝe repreue me  
 And certes sir þough noon auctore 1208

## GROUP D. § 2. WIFE OF BATH'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 229

were in no book<sup>t</sup> 3e gentils of<sup>t</sup> honour  
 Sayn þat<sup>t</sup> men schuld an old wight doon fauour  
 And clepe him fader for 3our gentillesse  
 And certes I schal fynden as I gesse 1212  
 Than drede 3ou nought<sup>t</sup> to ben a cokewold  
 Now þer þat<sup>t</sup> 3e sayn I am foul and old  
 For filthe and elde also mot<sup>t</sup> I the  
 Ben grete wardeyns vpon chastite / 1216  
 But<sup>t</sup> natheles sith I knowe 3our delyt<sup>t</sup>  
 I schal fulfille 3oure worldly appetyt<sup>t</sup>  
 Chese now quod sche oon of<sup>t</sup> þese þinges tweye  
 To haue me foul and old til þat I deye 1220  
 And be to 3ow a trewe humble wyf<sup>t</sup>  
 And neuer 3ow displease in al my lyf<sup>t</sup>  
 Or elles 3e wol haue me 3ong<sup>t</sup> and fair  
 And take 3our auenture of<sup>t</sup> þe repair 1224  
 þat<sup>t</sup> schal be to 3our hous by cause of<sup>t</sup> me  
 Or in som oþer place may wel be  
 Now chese 3our seluen whethir þat<sup>t</sup> 3ow likith  
 This knight<sup>t</sup> auysith him and sore sikith 1228  
 But<sup>t</sup> atte last<sup>t</sup> he sayd in þis manere  
 My lady and my loue. and my wif<sup>t</sup> so deere  
 I putte me in 3our wyse gouernaunce  
 Chesith 3our self<sup>t</sup> which may be most<sup>t</sup> pleasaunce 1232  
 And most<sup>t</sup> honour to 3ow and me also  
 I do no fors þe wheþer of<sup>t</sup> þe tuo  
 For as 3ow likith it<sup>t</sup> suffisith me  
 Than haue I gete of<sup>t</sup> 3ow þe maystry quod sche / 1236  
 Sith I may gouern and chese as me list/ [leaf 102, back]  
 3e certis wyf<sup>t</sup> quod he I hold it best<sup>t</sup>  
 kys me quod sche we ben no lenger wroþe  
 For by my trouþe. I wol be to 3ow boþe 1240  
 This is to say 3e boþe fair and good  
 I pray to god þat<sup>t</sup> I mot<sup>t</sup> sterue wood  
 But/ I be to 3ow also good and trewe  
 As euer was wyf<sup>t</sup> sippen þe world was newe 1244

And but/ I be to morow as fair to seen  
 As eny lady emperesse or queen  
 That is bitwixe thest and eek þe west  
 Doth by my lyf. right euen as ȝow lest 1248  
 Cast vp þe cortyns and look what þis is  
 And whan þe knyght saugh verrayly al þis  
 That sche so fair was and so ȝong þer to  
 For ioie he hent hir in hir armes tuo 1252  
 his herte bathid in a bath of blisse  
 A thousand tyme on rowe he gan hir kisse  
 And sche obeyed him in euery þing  
 That mighte doon him pleisauns or likyng 1256  
 And þus þay lyue vnto her lyues end  
 In parfyt ioie and ihū crist vs sende  
 housbondes meke ȝonge and freissche on bedde  
 And grace to ouerbyde hem þat we wedde 1260  
 And eek I pray to Ihū schort her lyues  
 That wil nought be gouerned after her wyues  
 And old and angry nygardes of despense  
 God send hem sone verray pestilence / 1264  
 ¶ Here endith þe wif of Bathe hire tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneth þe prologe of þe Freres tale

**T**His worthy lymytour þis noble Frere  
 he made alway a lourynge cheere  
 vpon the sompnour. but for honeste /

No vileyns worde. 3it to him spak he 1268

But atte last he sayd vnto þe wyf

Dame quod he. god 3iue 3ow good lyf

3e han her touchid al so mot I the

In scole matier gret difficulte 1272

3e han sayd mochel þing right wel I say [leaf 103]

But dame right as we ryden by þe way

Vs needeþ nou3t but for to speke of game

And lete auctorites in goddes name 1276

To preching and to scoles of clergie /

But if it like to þis companye /

I wil 3ow of a sompnour telle a game

Par de 3e may wel knowe by þe name 1280

That of a sompnour may no good be sayd

I pray 3ow þat noon of 3ow be euel a-payd

A Sompnour is a renner vp and down

wip maundement3 for fornicacioun 1284

And is y-bete at euery tounes eende /

Our oste spak / a sir 3e schold been heende /

And curteys as a man of 3our estaat

In company we wol haue no debaat 1288

Telleþ 3our tale and let þe sompnour be

Nay quop þe sompnour let him say to me

what so him list whan it comeþ to my lot

By god I schal him quyten euery grot 1292

I schal him telle which a gret honour

Is to ben a fals flaterynge lymytour

[Lines 1307-8 follow wrongly  
 here in the Six Texts.]

And his offis I schal him telle I-wis

Our host answerd and sayd þe sompnour þis 1296

And after þis he sayd vnto þe Frere

Telleþ forþ 3our tale my maister deere

[No gap in the MS.]

¶ **Narrat.**

Thilom þer was duellyng in my countre  
 An erchedeken a man of gret degre 1300  
 That boldely did execucioun  
 In punyschyng of fornicacioun  
 Of wicchecraft and eek of Bauderye  
 Of diffamacioun and auoutrie / 1304  
 Of chirchereues and of testamentes  
 Of contractes and of lak of sacramentes  
 And eek of many anoper cryme [These 2 lines are misplaced, as  
1297-8, in the MS Texts.]  
 which nedip not to reherse at þis tyme 1308  
 Of vsur and of Symony also  
 But certes lecchours did he grettest woo.  
 Thay schulde synge if þay were hent [See 108, back]  
 And smale tybers þay were fouly schent 1312  
 If eny persoun wold vpon hem pleyne  
 Ther might astert/ him no pecunial peyne  
 For smale tybes and for smal offrynge  
 he made þe poeple pitously to synge 1316  
 For er þe bisschop caught him in his hook  
 þay weren in þe archedeknes book  
 And hadde purgh his iurediccoun  
 Power to haue of hem correccioun 1320  
 he had a sompnour redy to his hond  
 A slyer boy was noon in Engelond  
 Ful priuely he had his espiaile  
 That taughte him wher he might auayle 1324  
 he couþe spare of lecchours oon or tuo  
 And techen him to four and twenty mo  
 For þough þis sompnour wood were as an hare  
 To telle his harlottry I wol not spare 1328



For we ben out of here correccioun  
 Thay haue of vs no iurediccioun  
 Ne neuer schul to terme of alle her lyues  
 Peter so been þe wommen of þe styues 1332  
 Thay beþ I-put out of oure cures  
 Pees with meschaunce and wip mesauentures  
 þus sayd our host and let him telle his tale /  
 Now telleþ forþ al þough þe sompnour gale 1336  
 Ne spareþ nought myn owne maister deere  
 þis false þeef þe sompnour quop þe frere ./  
 Had alway bawdes redy to his hond  
 As eny hauk to lure in engelond 1340  
 þat told him al þe secre þat þay knewe  
 For here acquaintance was not come of newe  
 þay were his approwours priuely  
 He took himself a gret profyt þer by 1344  
 His maister knew nat alway what he wan  
 wipoute maundement/ a lewed man  
 He couþe sompne vp peyne of cristes curs  
 And þay were glad to fille wel his purs ./ 1348  
 And make him grete festis atte nale / [leaf 104]  
 And right as Iudas hadde purses smale /  
 And was a theef. right such a þeef was he  
 his maister had not half his duete 1352  
 he was if I schal ȝiue him his laude .  
 A þeef a sompnour and eek a baude .  
 And he had wenches at his retenue  
 That whepir þat sir Robert or sir hughe 1356  
 Or Iak or Rauf or who-so þat it were  
 That lay by hem þay told it in his eere  
 Thus was þe wenche and he of oon assent  
 And he wold fecche a feyned maundement 1360  
 And sompne hem to chapitre boþe tuo  
 And pyle þe man and let þe wenche go  
 Than wold he sayn I schal frend for þy sake  
 Don strike þe out of oure lettres blake 1364

The þar no more as in þis cas trauayle  
 I am þy frend þer I þe may avayle  
 Certeynly he knew of bribours mo  
 Than possible is to telle in ȝeres tuo 1368  
 For in þis world nys dogge for þe bowe  
 þat can an hurt deer from an hol y-knowe  
 Bet þan þis sompnour knew a leccheour  
 Or auoutier or ellis a paramour 1372  
 And for þat was þe fruyt of al his rent  
 Therefore þer on he set al his entent  
 And so bifel þat oones on a day  
 This sompnour euer wayting on his pray 1376  
 Rod forth to sompne a widew and old ribibe  
 Feynyng a cause for he wolde bribe  
 And happed þat he say bifore him ryde  
 A gay ȝeman vnder a forest syde 1380  
 A bow he bar and arwes bright and kene  
 He had vpon a courtepy of grene  
 An hat vpon his heed wip frenges blake  
 Sir quod þis sompnour heyl and wel ouertake 1384  
 welcome quod he and euery good felawe  
 whider ridestow vnder þis grene schawe  
 Sayde þis ȝiman wiltow fer to day [leaf 101, back]  
 This sompnour answerd and sayde nay 1388  
 Her faste by quod he is myn entent  
 To ryden for to reysen vp a rent  
 That longith to my lordes duete  
 Artow þan a bayely quod he / 1392  
 He durste not for verray filth and schame  
 Sayn þat he was a sompnour for þe name  
 De par dieux quod þe ȝeman lieue broþer  
 Thou art a bayly. and I am another 1396  
 I am vnknownen as in þis contre  
 Of þin acquaintance I wol praye þe  
 And eek of broþerheed it ȝow lest  
 I haue gold and siluer in my chest 1400

If that þe hadde come in to oure schire  
 Al schal be þin right as þou wolt desire  
 Graunt mercy quod þis sompnour by my faith /  
 Euerich in otheres hond his trouthe laith 1404  
 For to be sworne breþeren til þay deyen  
 In daliaunce forþ þay ride and pleyen  
 This Sompnour which þat was as ful of iangles  
 As ful of venym ben þese wery-angles 1408  
 And euer enquering vpon euery þing  
 Broþer quod he wher now is þour dwellyng  
 Anoper day if þat I schuld þow seeche  
 This þiman him answerd in softe speche 1412  
 Broþer quod he fer in þe norþ contre  
 wher as I hope somtyme I schal þe se  
 Er we depart I schal þe so wel wisse  
 That of myn hous ne schaltow neuer misse 1416  
 Now broþer quod þis sompnour I þow pray  
 Teche me whil þat we ryden by þe way  
 Syn þat þe ben a baily as am I  
 Som subtilte as tel me faithfully 1420  
 In myn office. how þat I may wynne.  
 And spare not for consciens or for synne /  
 But as my broþer tel me how do þe  
 Now by my trouthe brothir myn sayd he / 1424  
 As I schal telle þe a faithful tale [leaf 106]  
 My wages ben ful streyt and eek ful smale  
 My lord to me is streyt and daungerous  
 And myn office is ful laborous 1428  
 And þerfor by extorciouns I lyue  
 For soþ I take al þat men wil me giue  
 Algate by sleighte or by violence  
 Fro þer to þer I wynne my despence 1432  
 I can no better telle faithfully  
 Now certes quod þis sompnour so fare I  
 I spare not to take god it woot  
 But if it be to heuy or to hoot 1436

what I may gete . in counseil priuely  
 No more consciens of þat haue I  
 Nere myn extorcions I might not lyuen  
 Ne of such iapes I wil not be schriuen 1440  
 Stomak ne conscience . know I noon  
 I schrew þes schrifteadres euerychoon  
 wel be we met by god and by seint Iame  
 But leue broþer telle me þy name 1444  
 Quod þis sompnour in þis mene while  
 This ȝeman gan a litel for to smyle  
 Broþir quod he woltow þat I þe telle  
 I am a feend my dwellyng is in helle 1448  
 And her I ryde about my purchasyng  
 To wite wher men wol ȝiue me eny þing  
 My purchas is þeffect of al my rent  
 loke how þou ridest for þe same entent/ 1452  
 To wynne good þou rekkist neuer how  
 Right so fare I for ryde I wolde now  
 vnto þe worldes ende for a pray  
 A quod þe sompnour benedicite what ȝe say 1456  
 I wende ȝe were a ȝeman trewely  
 ȝe han a mannes schap as wel as I  
 haue ȝe a figure . þan determinate  
 In helle þer ȝe ben in ȝour estate / 1460  
 Nay certeynly quod he þer haue we non  
 But whan vs likith we can make vs on  
 Or ellis make ȝow seme þat we ben schape [leaf 105, back]  
 Som tyme like a man or like an ape 1464  
 Or lik aungel can I ryde or go  
 It is no wonder þing þough it be so  
 A lousy iogelour can decyue þe  
 And parfay ȝit / can I more craft þan he 1468  
 ¶ why quod þis sompnour ryde ȝe þan or goon  
 In sondry wyse and nouȝt alway in oon  
 For quod he we wol vs in such forme make  
 As most abil is . oure pray to take / 1472

what makith 3ow to haue al þis labour  
 Ful many a cause lieue sir sompnour  
 Sayde þis feend. but al þing hath a tyme  
 þe day is schort and it is passed prime 1476  
 And 3it ne wan I no þing in þis day  
 I wol entent to wynnyng if I may  
 And not entende oure þinges to declare /  
 For broþer myn þy wit is al to bare 1480  
 To vnderstond al þough I told hem þe  
 For but þou axid. whi laboure we /  
 For som tyme we ben goddis instrumentes  
 And menes to don his comaundementes 1484  
 whan þat him list vpon his creatures  
 In diuers act. and in diuers figures .  
 wipouten him we haue no might certeyn  
 If þat him liste. stonde þer ageyn 1488  
 And som tyme at our prayer haue we leue  
 Only þe body and not þe soule greue /  
 witnes on Iope whom we dide ful wo  
 And somtyme haue we might of boþe tuo 1492  
 This is to say of body and soule eeke  
 And som tyme be we suffred for to seeke  
 vpon a man and doon his soule vnrest/  
 And not his body and al is for þe best 1496  
 whan he wipstondith oure temptacioun  
 It is a cause of his sauacioun  
 Al be it so. it was nought oure entent  
 he schuld be sauf. but þat we wold him hent 1500  
 And som tyme we ben seruaunt vnto man [leaf 106]  
 As to therchebisschope seynt Dunstan  
 And to thapostolis seruaunt was I  
 3it tel me quod þe sompnour faithfully 1504  
 Make 3e 3ow. newe bodies alway  
 Of element3. þe fend answerde nay  
 Som tyme we feyne. and somtyme we ryse  
 wip dede bodies. in ful wonder wyse 1508

And speke renably . and as fair and wel  
 As to þe Phitonissa dede Samuel  
 And ȝit wol somme say . it was not he  
 I do no fors . of ȝour diuinite 1512  
 But oon þing warne I þe I wol not iape .  
 þou wilt algates wite how we ben schape .  
 Thow schalt her afterward my broþer deere  
 Com wher þe nedith no þing for to leere 1516  
 For thou schalt by þin oughn experience  
 Conne in a chayer reden of þis sentence  
 Bet þan virgile whils he was on lyue /  
 Or Daunt also / now let vs ryde blyue 1520  
 For I wol holde company with þe  
 Til it be so þat þou forsake me  
 Nay quod þe sompnour þat schal nought betyde  
 I am a ȝiman þat knowen is ful wyde 1524  
 My troupe wol I hold as in þis caas  
 For þough þou be þe deuyl Sathanas  
 My troupe wol I holde . to þe my broþer  
 As I am swore . and ech of vs to oper 1528  
 For to be trewe breþeren in þis caas  
 For boþe we goon abouten oure purchas  
 Tak þou þi part and þat men wil þe ȝyuen  
 And I schal myn þus may we boþe lyuen 1532  
 And if eny of us . haue more þan oper  
 Let him be trewe . and part it wip his broþer  
 I graunte quod þe deuel by my fay /  
 And wip þat word þay riden forth her way 1536  
 And right at þentryng of a townes ende /  
 To which þis sompnour schope him for to wende  
 Thay seigh a cart that chargid was with hay [leaf 106, back]  
 which þat a carter drof forþ in his way / 1540  
 Deep was þe way for which þe carte stood  
 This carter smoot and cryde as he wer wood  
 hayt . brok . hayt . scot . / what spare ȝe for þe stoones  
 þe fend quod he . ȝow fech body and bones 1544

As ferforthly as euer wer 3e folid  
 So moche wo as I haue with 3ow tholid  
 The deuyl haue al bope cart'. and hors and hay  
 This sompnour sayde her schal we se play 1548  
 And ner þe feend he drough as nouȝt ne were  
 Ful priuely and rouned in his eere  
 herke my broþer herke by þi faith  
 Ne herest' nought' þou. what' þe carter saith 1552  
 hent' it anon · for he haþ ȝiuen it þe  
 bope hay and caples and eek' his cart' parde  
 ¶ Nay quod þe deuyl god wot' neuer a del  
 It' is nought' his entente trustith wel 1556  
 Ask' it' þiself' if' þou not' trowist' me  
 Or ellis stint' a while and þou schalt' se  
 This carter thakketh his hors vpon the croupe  
 And þay bygon to drawen and to stowpe 1560  
 hayt' now quod he ther. Ihu crist' 3ow blesse  
 And al his hondwerk' bope more and lesse  
 That' was wel twight' myn oughne lyard boy  
 I pray god saue þy body and seint loy 1564  
 Now is my cart' out' of' þe sloo par de  
 Lo broþer quod þo feend what' told I þe  
 Her may 3e seen. myn owne deere broþer  
 The carter spak' oon þing'. and þought' anoþer 1568  
 Let' vs go forth. abouten our viage  
 hier wyne I noþing' vpon cariage  
 whan þat' þay comen som what' out of' toune  
 This sompnour to his broþir gan to rounne 1572  
 Brothir quod he. her wonyth an old rebekke  
 That' had almost'. as lief' to leese hir necke /  
 As for to ȝiue a peny of' hir good  
 I wol pens þough þat' sche go wood 1576  
 Or I wol somone hir to oure office [leaf 107]  
 And ȝit' god wot' I know of' hir no vice  
 But' for þou canst' not' as in þis contre  
 wyne þy cost' tak' her ensample of' me 1580

- This sompnour clapped at þe widowes gate  
 Com out quod he þou olde viritrate  
 I trowe þou hast som frere or prest wip þe  
 who clappith þer sayd þis widow benedicite 1584  
 God saue 3ow sir. what is 3our swete wille  
 I haue quod he. a somonaunce of a bille  
 vp payne of cursyng loke þat þou be  
 To morwe biforn our erchedeknes kne 1588  
 To answer to þe court of certeyn þinges  
 Now quod sche Ihū crist and king of kinges  
 So wisly helpe me as I ne may  
 I haue ben seek and þat ful many a day 1592  
 I may not goon so fer quod sche ne ryde  
 But I be deed so prikith it in my syde  
 May I nat aske a lybel sir Sompnour  
 And answer þer. by my procuratour 1596  
 To suche þing as. men wol oppose me  
 3is quod þis sompnour. pay anoon let se  
 Twelf pens to me and I þe wil acquite  
 I schal no profyt haue þer-by but lite 1600  
 My mayster hath þe profyt and not I  
 Com of and let me ryden hastily  
 3if me my twelf pens I may no lenger tary  
 Twelf pens quod sche. now lady seinte mary 1604  
 So wisly help me. out of care and synne  
 þis wyde world. þough þat I schulde wynne  
 Ne haue I not · xij · pens wipinne myn hold  
 3e knowen wel þat I am pore and old 1608  
 kithe 3oure almes on me pore wrecche  
 Nay þan quod he. þe foule fend me fecche  
 If I þexcuse þough þou schalt be spilt  
 Allas quod sche god wot I haue no gilt 1612  
 Pay me quod he. or by þe swet seint Anne  
 As I wol bere away þy newe panne  
 For dette which þou owest me of old [leaf 107, back]  
 whan þat þou madest þin housbond cokewold 1616



I payd at hom for þi correccioun  
 Thou lixt quod sche by my sauacioun  
 Ne was I neuer er now wydow ne wyf  
 Somound vnto þour court/ in al my lyf 1620  
 Ne neuer I was but of my body trewe  
 vnto þe deuel rough and blak of hiewe  
 ȝiue I þy body and þe panne also  
 And whan þe deuyll herd hir curse so 1624  
 vpon his knees he sayd in þis manere  
 Now mabely myn owne modir deere  
 Is þis þour wil in earnest þat/ ȝe seye  
 þe deuel quod he fecche him er he deye 1628  
 And panne and al but he wol him repente  
 Nay olde stot þat is not/ myn entente /  
 Quod þis sompnour to repente me  
 For eny þing þat I haue had of þe 1632  
 I wold I had þy smok and euery cloth  
 Now broþir quod þe deuyll be not wroþ  
 Thy body and þis panne is myn by right  
 Thou schalt wip me to helle ȝit to night 1636  
 wher þou schalt knowen of our priuete  
 More þan a maister of diuinite  
 And wip þat word þe foule fend him hente  
 Body and soule he wip þe deuyll wente 1640  
 wher as þe sompnours han her heritage  
 And god þat maked after his ymage  
 Mankynde saue and gyde vs alle and some  
 And leene þis sompnour good man to bycome 1644  
 lordyngs I coup han . told ȝow quod þe frere  
 had I had leysir for þis sompnour here  
 After þe text of crist powel and Ion  
 And of oper doctours many oon 1648  
 Such peynes þat our herte might agrise  
 Al be it so no tonge may deuyse /  
 Though þat I might a þousand wynter telle  
 The peyn of þilke cursed hous of helle 1652

But for to kepe vs fro þat cursed place [leaf 108]  
 wakip and prayeth iħu for his grace  
 So kepe vs fro þe temptour Sathanas  
 herknith þis word. beþ war as in þis cas 1656  
 'The lyoun syt in his awayt alway  
 To slen þe Innocent if þat he may  
 Disposith 3oure hertes to wipstonde  
 The fend þat wolde make 3ow þral and bonde / 1660  
 He may not tempte 3ow ouer 3our might  
 For crist wol be 3our champioun and knight  
 And prayeth þat oure sompnour him repente  
 Of his mys dede. er þat þe fend him hente. 1664

¶ Here endith þe frere his tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And here begynneth þe sompnour his prologe

**T**his sompnour in his styrop vp he stood  
 vpon þe Frere his herte was so wood  
 That lyk' an aspen leef/ he quok' for Ire  
 lordyngs quod he . but' oon þing' I desire 1668  
 I 3ow biseke þat' of' 3our curtesye  
 Syn 3e han herd þis false frere lye  
 As suffrith me I may my tale telle  
 This frere bosteth þat' he knowith helle 1672  
 And god it' wot' . þat' is litil wonder  
 Freres and feendes been but' litel asonder  
 For pardy 3e han often tyme herd telle /  
 how þat' a frere rauyscht' was to helle 1676  
 In spirit ones by a visioun  
 And as an aungel . lad him vp and down  
 To schewen him þe peynes þat' þer were  
 In al þe place saugh he not' a frere 1680  
 Of' oper folk' he saugh ynowe in wo  
 vnto þis aungel spak' þis frere þo  
 Now sire quod he han freres such a *grace*  
 That' noon of' hem schal comen in þis place 1684  
 3is quod þis aungil many a mylioun  
 And vnto Sathanas he lad him down  
 And now hap sathanas saith he a tayl  
 Broder þan of' a Carrik' is þe sayl 1688  
 hold vp þy tayl þou Sathanas quod he [leaf 108, back]  
 Schew forth þyn ars and let þe frere se  
 wher is þe nest' of' freres in þis place  
 And er þan half' a forlong' way of' space 1692

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244 GROUP D. § 5. PRIAR-SUMMONER LINK. Harleian 7334.

Right so as bees swarmen out of an hyue  
Out of þe deueles ers þay gonne dryue  
Twenty þousand freres on a route  
And þorugh out helle swarmed al aboute 1696  
And comen as fast as þay may goon  
And in his ers þay crepen euerich oon ·  
he clappid his tayl agayn and lay ful stille  
This frere whan he loked had his fille 1700  
Vpon þe torment of þis sory place  
his spirit god restored of his grace  
vnto his body agayn and he awook  
But napeles for fere ȝit he quook 1704  
So was þe deueles ers ȝit in his mynde  
That is his heritage of verray kynde/  
God saue ȝow alle saue þis cursed frere  
My proloug wol I ende in þis manere 1708

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ Narrat

**L**Ordynge þer is . in Engeland I gesse  
 A mersschly lond called holdernesse  
 In which þer went a lymytour aboute  
 .To preche and eek to begge it is no doubte 1712  
 And so bifel it . on a day þis frere  
 had preched at a chirch in his manere  
 And specially abouen euery þing  
 Excited he þe poepul in his preching 1716  
 To trentals and to ȝiue for goddis sake  
 wher that men mighten holy soules make  
 Ther as diuine seruyis is honoured  
 Nought þer as it is wasted and deuoured 1720  
 Neither it needeþ not for to be ȝiue  
 As to possessioneres þat mow lyue  
 Thanked be god in wele and abundaunce  
 Trentals sayd he delyuereth fro penaunce 1724  
 her frendes soules as wel eld as ȝonge  
 ȝe whanne þat þay hastily ben songe  
 Nought for to hold a prest iolif and gay [leaf 109]  
 he syngith not but oon masse in a day 1728  
 Delyuerith out quod he þe soules  
 Ful hard it is wiþ fleischhok or with oules  
 To ben y-clawed . or brend or I-bake  
 Now speed ȝow hastily for cristes sake 1732  
 And whan þis frere had sayd al his entent  
 with *Qui cum patre* . forþ he went  
 whan folk in chirch had ȝiue him what hem lest  
 he went his way no lenger wold he rest 1736

with scrip and pyked staf<sup>t</sup> y-touked hye  
 In euery hous and gan to pore and pry  
 And beggyd mele or chese or ellis corn  
 his felaw had a staf<sup>t</sup> typped with horn 1740  
 A payr of<sup>t</sup> tablis al of<sup>t</sup> yuory  
 And a poyntel y-polischt<sup>t</sup> fetisly  
 And wroot<sup>t</sup> þe names alway as he stood  
 Of alle folk<sup>t</sup> that<sup>t</sup> 3af<sup>t</sup> him eny good 1744  
 Ascaunce þat<sup>t</sup> he wolde for hem preye  
 3if<sup>t</sup> vs a busshel. whet<sup>t</sup> or malt<sup>t</sup> or reye  
 A goddes kichil or a trip of<sup>t</sup> chese  
 Or elles what<sup>t</sup> 3ow list<sup>t</sup> we may not<sup>t</sup> chese 1748  
 A goddes halpeny or a masse peny  
 Or 3if<sup>t</sup> vs of<sup>t</sup> 3oure braune if<sup>t</sup> 3e haue eny  
 A dagoun of<sup>t</sup> 3our blanket<sup>t</sup> leuee dame  
 Oure suster deer. lo her I write 3our name 1752  
 Bacoun or beef<sup>t</sup> or such þing<sup>t</sup> as we fynde  
 A stourdy harlot<sup>t</sup> ay went hem by hynde  
 That<sup>t</sup> was her hostis man and bar a sak<sup>t</sup>  
 And what<sup>t</sup> men 3af<sup>t</sup> hem layd it<sup>t</sup> on his bak<sup>t</sup> 1756  
 And whan þat he was out atte dore anoon  
 he planed out þe names euerychoon  
 That<sup>t</sup> he biforn had writen in his tablis  
 He serued hem wip<sup>t</sup> nyfles and wip<sup>t</sup> fablis 1760  
 Nay þer þou lixt<sup>t</sup> þou sompnour sayd þe frere  
 Pees quod our host<sup>t</sup> for cristes moder deere  
 Tel forþ þy tale and spare it<sup>t</sup> not at al  
 So thriue I quod þe sompnour so I schal 1764  
 So long<sup>t</sup> he wente hous by hous til he [leaf 109, back]  
 Cam til an hous þer he was wont<sup>t</sup> to be  
 Refresshid mor þan in an hundrid placis.  
 Syk<sup>t</sup> lay þe housbond man whos þat<sup>t</sup> þe place is. 1768  
 Bedred vpon a couche lowe he lay  
 Deus hic quod he O thomas frend good day  
 Sayde þis frere al curteysly and softe /  
 O. Thomas god 3eld it<sup>t</sup> 3ow ful ofte 1772

haue I vpon þis bench I-fare ful wel  
 her haue I eten many a mery mel  
 And fro þe bench he drof away þe cat  
 And layd a-doun his potent and his hat 1776  
 And eek his scrip and set him soft a-doun  
 his felaw was go walkid in þe toun  
 Forth with his knaue to þe ostelrye /  
 wher as he schop him þilke night to lye 1780  
 O deere maister quod þe seeke man  
 how haue 3e fare sippe march bygan  
 I saygh 3ow nouȝt þis fourtenight or more  
 God wot quod he labord haue I ful sore 1784  
 And specially for þy saluacioun  
 haue I sayd many a precious orisoun  
 And for myn oþer frendes god hem blesse /  
 I haue to day ben at your chirche at messe 1788  
 And sayd a sermoun after my simple wit  
 Nought al after þe text of holy wryt  
 For it is hard for 3ow as I suppose  
 And þerfor wil I teche 3ow ay þe glose 1792  
 Glosyng is a ful glorious þing certayn  
 For letter slep so as we clerkes sayn  
 þer haue I taught hem to be chariteable  
 And spend her good. þer it is resonable 1796  
 And þer I seigh our dame wher is sche /  
 3ond in þe 3erd I trowe þat sche be  
 Sayde þis man. and sche wil come anoon  
 ¶ Ey mayster welcome be 3e by seint Iohn 1800  
 Sayde þis wyf how fare 3e hertily  
 þe frere ariseþ vp ful curteysly  
 And hir embracith in his armes narwe [leaf 110  
 And kist hir swete. and chirkith as a sparwe 1804  
 with his lippes dame quod he right wel.  
 As he þat is 3our seruaunt euery del  
 Thankyd be god þat 3ow 3af soule and lif  
 3it saugh I not þis day so fair a wyf 1808

In al þe chirche god so saue me .  
 3e God amend defautes sir quod sche /  
 Algates welcome be 3e by my fay  
 Graunt' mercy dame þis haue I found alway 1812  
 But' of 3our grete goodnes by 3oure leue  
 I wolde pray 3ow þat' 3e 3ow not' greene  
 I wil wip Thomas speke a litel þrowe  
 These curates ben ful negligent' and slowe 1816  
 To grope tendurly a conscience  
 In schrif't' and preching' is my diligence  
 Study in petres wordes and in poules  
 And walk' and fische cristen mennes soules . 1820  
 To 3elde Ihu crist' his propre rent  
 To spreden his word is al myn entent  
 Now by 3our leue o deere sire quod sche  
 Chyd him right' wel for seinte trinite 1824  
 he is as angry as a pissemyre  
 Though þat' he haue al þat he can desire  
 Though I him wrye on night' and make him warm  
 And ouer him lay my leg' oþer myn arm 1828  
 he groneth lik' our boor that' lith in sty .  
 Othir disport' of him right' noon haue I  
 I may please him in no maner caas .  
 O Thomas Ieo vous dy Thomas Thomas . 1832  
 This makþ þe feend . þis moste ben amendid  
 Ire is a þing' þat' highe god defendid  
 And þer of' wold I speke a word or tuo  
 Now maister quod þe wyf' er þat' I go / 1836  
 what' wil 3e dyne . I wil go þer aboute  
 Now dame quod he Ieo vous dy saun3 doute  
 haue I not' of' a capoun but' þe lyuere  
 And of' 3our softe brede but' a schiuere 1840  
 And after þat' a rostyð pigges heed [leaf 110, back]  
 But' þat' I wold for me no best' were deed  
 Than had I wip 3ow homly suffisaunce  
 I am a man of' litel sustinaunce 1844



My spirit hap his fostryng' on þe bible /  
 þe body is ay so redy and penyble  
 To wake þat' my stomak' is destroyed  
 I pray ȝow dame þat' ȝe be not' anoyed 1848  
 For I so frendly ȝow my counseil schewe  
 By I nold not' telle it but' a fewe /  
 Now sir quod sche but' o word er I go  
 My child is deed wipinne þise wykes tuo 1852  
 Soon after þat' ȝe went' out' of þis toun  
 his deth saugh I by reuelacioun  
 Sayde þis frere at' hoom in oure dortour  
 I dar wel sayn er þat' half' an hour 1856  
 After his deth . I seigh him born to blisse  
 In myn auysioun so god me wisse .  
 So did our sextein . and our fermerere  
 That' han ben trewe freres many a ȝere 1860  
 þay may now god be thanked of his lone  
 Maken her Iubile . and walk' alloone  
 But' vp I roos and al our couent' eke  
 With many a teere trilling' on my cheeke . 1864  
 Te deum was our song' and no þing' ellis  
 wipouten noys or clateryng' of bellis  
 Saue þat' to crist' I sayd an orisoun  
 Thankyng' him of my reuelacioun 1868  
 For sire and dame trustith me right' wel  
 Our orisouns ben more effectuel  
 And more we se of goddis secre þinges  
 Than borel folk' alþough þat' þay ben kinges 1872  
 we lyue in pouert' and in abstinence  
 And borel folk' in riches and dispence  
 Of mete and drink' and in her ful delyt  
 we han al þis worldes delit' in despyt' 1876  
 lazar and Diues lyueden diuersely  
 And diuers guerdoun hadde þay þerby  
 who-so wol praye . faste . and be clene . [leaf 111]  
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene 1880

we faren as saith papostil cloþ and foode  
 Sufficeþ vs . þough þay ben not goode  
 The clenness and þe fastyng of vs freres  
 Makith þat crist acceptith oure prayeres 1884  
 lo moyses fourty dayes and fourty night  
 Fasted er þat þe highe god of might  
 Spak wip him in . þe mount of Synay  
 with empty wombe fastyng many a day 1888  
 Receyued he þe lawe þat was writen  
 with goddis fynger and holy wel 3e w  
 In mount oreb or he had eny speche  
 with highe god þat is oure lyues leche 1892  
 He fastid and was in contemplacioun  
 Aron þat had þe temple in gouernacioun  
 And eek þe oper prestes euerychoon  
 In to þe temple whan þay schulden goon 1896  
 To preye for þe poeple and doon seruise  
 Thay nolden drinken . in no maner wise /  
 No drynke which þat dronke might hem make /  
 But þer in abstinence prey and wake 1900  
 lest þat þay dedin . tak heed what I say  
 But þay ben sobre þat for þe pepul pray  
 war þat I say no mor . for it suffisith  
 Oure lord Ihu as oure lore deuysith 1904  
 3af vs ensampil of fastyng and prayeres  
 þerfore we mendinaunt; we cely freres  
 Ben wedded to pouert and to continence  
 To charite . humblesse and abstinence 1908  
 To persecucioun for rightwisnesse  
 To wepyng misericord and clenness  
 And þerfor may 3e seen þat oure prayeres  
 I speke of vs we mendeaunts . we freres 1912  
 Ben to þe hihe god mor acceptable  
 Than 3oures with 3our festis at 3our table  
 Fro paradis first if I schal not lye  
 was man out chaced for his glotonye 1916

And chast<sup>t</sup> was man in paradis certeyn [leaf 111, back]  
 But now herk/ thomas. what I schal þe seyn  
 I ne haue no tixt<sup>t</sup> of it as I suppose /  
 But<sup>t</sup> I schal fynd it in a maner glose / 1920  
 That<sup>t</sup> specially our swete lord ihc<sup>t</sup>  
 Spak<sup>t</sup> þis by freres whan he sayde þus  
 Blessed be þay þat<sup>t</sup> pouer in spirit ben  
 And so forþ in þe gospel 3e may seen 1924  
 wheþer it<sup>t</sup> be likir oure professioun  
 Or heris þat<sup>t</sup> swymmen in possessioun  
 Fy on her pomp and on her glotenye  
 And on her lewydnesse I hem defye 1928  
 Me þinkith þay ben lik<sup>t</sup> Iouynian  
 Fat<sup>t</sup> as a whal and walken as a swan  
 Al vinolent<sup>t</sup> as botel in þe spence  
 her prayer is of ful gret<sup>t</sup> reuerence 1932  
 whan þay for soules sayn þe psalm of dauid  
 lo boef<sup>t</sup> þay say. Cor meum eructauit  
 who folwith cristes gospel and his fore  
 But<sup>t</sup> we þat<sup>t</sup> humble ben and chast<sup>t</sup> and pore 1936  
 werkers of goddes word and auditours  
 Ther-for right<sup>t</sup> as an hauk<sup>t</sup> vpon a sours  
 vpspringeth in to þaer right<sup>t</sup> so prayeres  
 Of charitabil and chaste busy freres 1940  
 Maken her sours to goddis eeres tuo  
 Thomas thomas so mote I ryde or go  
 And by þat<sup>t</sup> lord þat<sup>t</sup> clepid is seint<sup>t</sup> Iue  
 Ner þou oure broþer schuldestow neuer þriue 1944  
 In oure chapitre pray we day and night<sup>t</sup>  
 To crist<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he þe sende hele and might<sup>t</sup>  
 Thy body for to welden hastily  
 God wot<sup>t</sup> quod he þer-of<sup>t</sup> nought<sup>t</sup> feeble I. 1948  
 As help me crist<sup>t</sup> as I in fewe 3eeres  
 haue spendid vpon many diuers freres  
 Ful many a pound 3it<sup>t</sup> fare I neuer þe bet<sup>t</sup>  
 Certeyn my good haue I almost byset/ 1952

Far wel my gold for it is almost a go  
 The frere answerd // O thomas dostow so  
 what needith 3ow dyuerse freres seche [leaf 112]  
 what needith him þat hap a parfyt leche / 1956  
 To sechen opir leches in þe toun  
 3oure inconstance is 3oure confusioun  
 holde 3e þan me or oure couent  
 To praye for 3ow insufficient 1960  
 Thomas þat iape is not worth a myte  
 3oure malady is for we haue to lite  
 ¶ A 3iue þat couent half a quarter otes  
 A 3iue þat couent four and twenty grotes 1964  
 A 3iue þat frere a peny and let him go .  
 Nay nay thomas . it may nought be so  
 what is a ferthing worth depart in tuelue  
 lo ech þing þat is ooned in himselue 1968  
 Is more strong þan whan it is to-skatrid  
 Thomas of me þou schalt not ben y-flatrid  
 Thow woldist haue our labour al for nought  
 The hihe god þat al this world hath wrought 1972  
 Saith þat a werkman is worpy his hyre  
 Thomas nou3t of 3our tresor I desire  
 For my self . but for that oure couent/  
 To pray for 3ow is ay so diligent 1976  
 And for to buylden cristes holy chirche  
 Thomas if 3e wil lerne for to wirche /  
 Of buyldyng vp on churches may 3e fynde  
 If it be good in thomas lyf of ynde 1980  
 3e lye her ful . of anger and of Ire  
 wip which þe deuel set 3our hert on fuyre  
 And chyden her þe holy Innocent  
 3our wyf þat is . so meke and pacient / 1984  
 And þerfor trow me thomas if þou list  
 Ne stryue nought wip þy wif as for þi best  
 And ber þis word away now by þy faith  
 Touchinge such þing lo þe wise man saith 1988

¶ wipinne þin hous be þou no lyoun  
 To þy subiects . do noon oppressioun  
 Ne make þyn acqueyntis fro þe fle  
 And ȝit<sup>t</sup> thomas eftsons I charge þe / 1992  
 Be war for hir þat<sup>t</sup> in þy bosom slepith [leaf 112, back]  
 war for þe serpent þat<sup>t</sup> so priuely crepith  
 vnder þe gras and styngith priuely  
 Be war my sone and werk<sup>t</sup> paciently 1996  
 For twenty þousend men han lost<sup>t</sup> her lyues  
 For stryuyng<sup>t</sup> wip her lemmans and her wyues.  
 Now syns ȝe han so holy and meeke a wif<sup>t</sup>  
 what<sup>t</sup> nedith ȝow thomas to make strif<sup>t</sup> 2000  
 Ther nys I-wis no serpent<sup>t</sup> so cruel  
 when men trede on his tail ne half<sup>t</sup> so fel  
 As womman is when sche hap caught<sup>t</sup> an Ire  
 Vengeans is þanne . al þat<sup>t</sup> þay desire 2004  
 Schortly may no man by rym and vers [Spurious] 2004b  
 Tellen her thoughtes þay ben so dyuers [ „ ] 2004c  
 Ire is a þing<sup>t</sup> oon þe grete of<sup>t</sup> seuene  
 Abhominable to þe god of<sup>t</sup> heuene  
 And to himself<sup>t</sup> it is destruccioun  
 This euery lewed vicory or parsoun 2008  
 Can say how Ire engendrith homicide  
 Ire is in soth executour of<sup>t</sup> pride  
 I coupe of<sup>t</sup> Ire seyn so moche sorwe  
 My tale schulde laste til to morwe 2012  
 Ire is þe grate of<sup>t</sup> synne as saith þe wise [Spurious] 2012b  
 To fle þer fro ech man schuld him deuyse [ „ ] 2012c  
 And þer-for pray I god boþe day and night<sup>t</sup>  
 An Irous man god send him litil might<sup>t</sup>  
 It is greet<sup>t</sup> harm . and also gret<sup>t</sup> pite  
 To set<sup>t</sup> an Irous man in high degre 2016  
 ¶ whilom þer was an Irous potestate  
 As seith senek<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> duryng<sup>t</sup> his estaat<sup>t</sup> /  
 vpon a day out/ riden knightes tuo  
 And as fortune wolde right<sup>t</sup> as it were so 2020  
 That<sup>t</sup> oon of<sup>t</sup> hem cam home þat<sup>t</sup> oþer nouȝt<sup>t</sup>  
 Anoon þe knight<sup>t</sup> bifore the iuge is brouȝt<sup>t</sup>  
 That<sup>t</sup> sayde þus . þou hast<sup>t</sup> þy felaw slayn  
 For which I deme þe to deth certayn 2024

And to anothir knight comaundid he /  
 Go lede him to þe deth I charge þe /  
 And happed as þay wente by þe weye [leaf 113]  
 Toward þe place þer he schulde deye 2028  
 The knight com which . men wend hadde be deed  
 Than þoughten þay it were þe beste reed  
 To lede hem boþe to þe iuge agayn  
 Thay sayden lord þe knight hap not slayn 2032  
 his felaw lo . heer he stont hool on lyue  
 3e schal be deed quod he so mote I priue  
 That is to sayn boþe oon . tuo . and þre  
 And to þe firste knyȝt right þus spak he 2036  
 I deme þe þou most algate be deed  
 Than þoughte þay it were þe beste rede [Spurious] 2037b  
 To lede him forþ in to a fair mede [ „ ] 2037c  
 And quod þe iuge also þou most lese þin heed  
 For þou art cause why þy felaw deyth  
 And to þe þridde felaw þus he seith 2040  
 Thou hast nought doon þat I comaundid þe  
 And þus he let don sle hem alle þre  
 Irous Cambises was eek dronkelewe  
 And ay delited him to ben a schrewe 2044  
 And so bifel a lord of his meigne  
 That loued vertues and eek / moralite  
 Sayd on a day bitwix hem tuo right þus  
 A lord is lost if he be vicious 2048  
 An Irous man is lik a frentik best [Spurious] 2048b  
 In which þer is of wisdom noon arrest [ „ ] 2048c  
 And dronkenes is eek a foul record  
 Of any man and namly of a lord  
 Ther is ful many eyȝe and many an eere  
 Awaytand on a lord and he not where 2052  
 For goddes loue drynk more attemperelly  
 wyn makith man to lese wrecchedly  
 his mynde and eek . his lymes euerichoon  
 The reuers schaltow seen quod he anon 2056  
 And proue it by þin owne experience  
 That wyn ne dop to folk non such offence  
 Ther is no wyn . byreueth me my wit  
 Of hond of foot ne of myn eyȝe sight 2060

And for despyt he dronke moche more [leaf 113, back]  
 An hundrid part þan he had doon byfore  
 And right anoon þis irous cursid wrecche /  
 Let þis knightes sone anoon biforn him fecche 2064  
 Comaundyng hem þay schuld biforn him stonde  
 And sodeinly he took his bowe on honde  
 And vp þe streng he pulled to his eere  
 And wip an arwe he slough þe child right þere 2068  
 Now wheþir haue I a sikur hond or noon  
 Quod he is al my mynde and might agoon  
 hath wyn byreuyd me myn eye sight  
 what schuld I telle þe answer of þe knight 2072  
 his sone was slayn þer is no more to say  
 Be war þerfor. wip lordes how 3e play  
 Syngith placebo. and I schal if I can  
 But if it be. vnto a pore man 2076  
 To a pore man men schuld his vices telle  
 But not to a lord þey he schuld go to helle  
 lo Irous Cirus þilke Percien  
 how he destroyed þe ryuer of Gysen 2080  
 For þat an hors of his was dreynt þer Inne.  
 whan þat he wente Babiloyne to wynne  
 he made þat þe ryuer was so smal  
 þat wommen mighte wade it ouer al 2084  
 lo what sayde he þat so wel teche can  
 Ne be no felaw. to an irous man  
 Ne with no wood man walke by þe way  
 lest þe repent I wol no lenger say 2088  
 Now thomas leue broþer leue þin Ire  
 Thow schalt me fynde as iust as is a squire  
 Thyn anger doth þe al to sore smerte  
 hald not þe deueles knyft alway at þyn herte 2092  
 But schewe to me al þy confessioun  
 Nay quod þis syke man by seynt symoun  
 I haue ben schriuen þis day of my ourate  
 I haue him told holly al myn estate/ 2096

Nedith no more to speken of it saith he /  
 But if me list of myn humilite .  
 3if me þan of þy good to make our cloyster [leaf 114]  
 Quod he for many a muscle and many an oyster 2100  
 hap ben oure foode our Cloyster to arreyse  
 whan oper men han ben ful wel at eyse  
 And 3it god wot vnnethe þe foundement  
 Parformed is ne of oure pauyment 2104  
 Is nought a tyle 3it wipinne our wones  
 By god we owe 3it fourty pound for stones  
 Now help Thomas for him þat harewed helle  
 Or elles moote we oure bookes selle 2108  
 And 3if 3ow lakke oure predicacioun  
 Thanne goþ þe world al to destruccioun  
 For who-so wold vs fro þe world byreue  
 So god me saue Thomas by 3oure leue 2112  
 he wolde byreue out of þis world þe sonne  
 For who can teche . and werken as we conne  
 And þis is not of litel tyme quod he  
 But sippen Elye was her or ele 2116  
 han freres ben fynde I of record  
 In charite I-þanked be oure lord  
 Now Thomas help for seynte charite  
 A-doun he sette him anoon on his kne 2120  
 This sike man wex welneigh wood for Ire  
 he wolde þat þe frere had ben on fuyre  
 with his fals dissimulacioun  
 Such þing as is in my possessioun 2124  
 Quod he þat may I 3eue 3ow and noon oper  
 3e sayn me þus how þat I am 3our broþer  
 3e certes quod þe frere trusteth wel  
 I took our dame þe letter vnder oure sel 2128  
 Now wel quod he and som what schal I 3iue  
 Vnto 3our holy couent whils þat I lyue  
 And in þyn hond þou schalt it haue anoon  
 On þis condicioun and oper noon 2132



That þou depart it so my deere broþer  
 That euery frere haue as moche as oþer  
 Thy schaltow swere on þy professioun  
 wipouten fraude or cauillacioun 2136  
 I swere it quod þis frere vpon my faith [leaf 114, back]  
 And þer-with his hond in his he laith  
 lo her myn hond in me schal be no lak  
 Now þanne put þyn hond doun at my bak 2140  
 Sayde þis man and grope wel byhynde  
 Bynethe my buttok þere schaltow fynde  
 A þing þat I haue hud in priuete  
 A þought þis frere þat schal go with me / 2144  
 And doun his hond he launched to þe clifte  
 In hope for to fynde þer a ȝifte  
 And whan þis syke man felte þis frere  
 Aboute his tuel grope þer and heere 2148  
 Amyd his hond he leet þe freere a fart  
 Ther is no capul drawyng in a cart  
 That might haue let a fart of such a soun  
 The frere vpstart as doth a wood lyoun 2152  
 A false cherl quod he for goddes bones  
 This hastow in despit don for þe noones  
 Thou schalt abyge þis fart if þat I may  
 his meyne which þat herd of þis affray 2156  
 Com lepard In and chased out þe frere  
 And forth he goþ wip a foul angry cheere  
 And fat his felaw þere lay his stoor  
 he lokid as it were a wylde boor 2160  
 And grynte with his teep so was he wroth  
 A stordy paas doun to þe court he goth  
 wher as þer wonyd a man of gret honour  
 To whom þat he was alway confessour 2164  
 This worpy man was lord of þat / village  
 This frere com as he were in a rage  
 wher þat þis lord sat etyng at his bord  
 Vnneþe might þe frere speke a word 2168

Til atte last<sup>t</sup> he sayde god 3ow se  
 This lord gan loke and sayde benedicite  
 What<sup>t</sup> frere Iohn what<sup>t</sup> maner world is þis /  
 I se wel. þat<sup>t</sup> som þing<sup>t</sup> is amys 2172  
 3e loke as þough þe woode were ful of þeuys  
 Sit<sup>t</sup> doun anoon and tel me what<sup>t</sup> 3our gref<sup>t</sup> is  
 And it<sup>t</sup> schal ben amendit if<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> I may [leaf 115]  
 I haue quod he had a despit<sup>t</sup> to day 2176  
 God 3elde 3ow a-doun in 3oure vilage  
 That<sup>t</sup> in þis world is noon so pore a page/  
 That<sup>t</sup> he nold haue abhominacioun  
 Of<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> I haue receyued in 3oure toun 2180  
 And 3et ne greuith me no þing<sup>t</sup> so sore  
 As þat<sup>t</sup> þis elde cherl wip lokkes hore  
 Blasphemed hap<sup>t</sup> our holy couent<sup>t</sup> eeke  
 Now maister quod þis lord I 3ow biseke 2184  
 No maister sir quod he but seruitour  
 þough I haue had in scole such honour  
 God likith not<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> Raby men vs calle  
 Neither in market neyther in 3our large halle 2188  
 No fors quod he tellith me al 3our greef  
 þis frere sayd sire an odious meschief<sup>t</sup>  
 This day bytid is to myn ordre and to me  
 And so *par consequens* to ech degre 2192  
 Of<sup>t</sup> holy chirche god amend it soone  
 Sir quod þe lord 3e wot<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> is to doone  
 Distempre 3ow nought<sup>t</sup> 3e ben my confessour  
 3e ben þe salt<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> þerþe and sauour 2196  
 For goddes loue 3oure pacience 3e holde  
 Tel me 3our greef<sup>t</sup> and he anoon him tolde  
 As 3e han herd bifore 3e wot<sup>t</sup> wel what<sup>t</sup>  
 The lady of<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> hous ay stille sat<sup>t</sup> 2200  
 Til sche had herd what<sup>t</sup> þe frere sayde  
 Ey goddes moodir quod she blisful mayde  
 Is þer ought<sup>t</sup> elles tel me faithfully  
 Ma dame quod he how þynke 3ow þerby 2204

how þat me þynkith quod sche so god me speede  
 I say a cherl hap doon a cherles deede  
 what schuld I say god let him neuer þe  
 His syke heed is full of vanyte 2208  
 I hold him in a maner frenesye /  
 Ma dame quod he I-wis I schal not lye  
 But I in opir wise may be wreke  
 I schal defame him ouer al wher I speke 2212  
 The false blasfememour þat chargid me [leaf 115, back]  
 To parten þat wil not departed be  
 To euery man yliche wip meschaunce  
 The lord sat stille as he were in a traunce 2216  
 And in his hert he rollid vp and doun  
 How had þis cherl ymaginacioun  
 So schewe such a probleme to þe frere  
 Neuer eft er now herd I of such matiere 2220  
 I trowe þe deuel put it in his mynde  
 In ars metrik / schal þer no man fynde  
 Biforn þis day of such a questioun  
 who schulde make a demonstracioun 2224  
 That euery man schuld haue a lyk his part  
 As of a soun or of a sauour of a fart  
 O nyce proude cherl I schrew his face  
 lo sires quod þe lord wip harde grace 2228  
 who euer herde of such a þing er now  
 To euery man y-like tel me how  
 It is impossible it may not be  
 Ey nyce cherl god let him neuer þe 2232  
 The romblyng of a fart and euery soun  
 Nis but an aier reuerberacioun  
 And euer it wastith lyte and lyt away  
 Ther nys no man can deme by my fay / 2236  
 If þat it were departed equally  
 what lo my cherl what lo how schrewedly  
 vnto my confessour to day he spak  
 I hold him certainly demoniak 2240

Now etith 3our mete and let þe cherl go play /  
 Let him go honge himself on deuel way /

*[The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire.  
 No break in the MS.]*

Now stood þe lordes squier at þe bord  
 That carf his mete and herde word by word 2244  
 Of al þis þing which þat I of haue sayd  
 My lord quod he be 3e nou3t euel payd  
 I coupe telle for a gowne cloth  
 To 3ow sir frere so þat 3e be not wroth 2248  
 How þat þis fart euen / departed schuld be  
 Among 3our couent if I comaunded be  
 Tel quod þe lord and þou schalt haue anoon [leaf 116]  
 A goune cloþ by god and by seint Iohn 2252  
 My lord quod he whan þat þe wedir is fair  
 wipoute wynd or pertourbyng of ayr  
 let bring a large whel in to þis halle  
 But þat it haue his spokes alle 2256  
 Twelf spokes hath a cart whel comunly  
 And bring me . xij . freres wit 3e why  
 For prettene is a couent as I gesse /  
 3our noble confessour her god him blesse 2260  
 Schal parfourn vp þe nombre of þis couent  
 Thanne schal þay knele doun by oon assent  
 And to eury spokes ende in þis manere  
 Ful sadly lay his nose schal a frere 2264  
 3our noble confessour þer god him saue  
 Schal hold his nose vpright vnder þe naue  
 Than schal þis churl with bely stif and tough  
 As eny tabor hider ben y-brought 2268  
 And sette him on þe whele of þis cart  
 vpon þe naue and make him lete a fart  
 And 3e schul seen vp peril of my lif  
 By verray proef þat is demonstratif 2272

That equally þe soun of it wol wende /  
 And eek þe stynk vnto þe spokes ende  
 Saue þat þis worþy man ȝour confessour  
 By cause he is a man of gret honour 2276  
 Schal haue þe firste fruyt as resoun is  
 The noble vsage of freres is þis  
 The worthy men of hem first schal be serued  
 As certeynly he haþ it wel deserued 2280  
 he hath to day taught vs so mochil good  
 with preching in þe pulpit þer he stood  
 That I may vouche sauf I say for me  
 He hadde þe firste smel of fartes þre 2284  
 And so wold al his couent hardily  
 he berith him so fair and holily  
 The lord þe lady and ech man sauf þe frere  
 Sayde þan Iankyn spak in þis matiere 2288  
 As wel as euclide or elles protholome [leaf 116, back]  
 Touchand þe clerk þay sayd þat subtilte  
 An high wyt made him speken as he spak  
 he nas no fool ne no demoniak / 2292  
 And Iankyn haþ I-wonne a newe goune  
 My tale is don. we ben almost at toune.  
 ¶ Here endith the sompnours tale

[No break in the MS.]

## GROUP E. FRAGMENT VI.

## § 1. THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe Clerk of Oxenford prologe

S Ir clerk of Oxenford our hoste sayde  
 3e ryde as stille and coy as doþ a mayde /  
 were newe spoused sittynge at a bord

This day ne herd I of 3our mouth a word 4

I trowe 3e study aboute som sophime

But Salomon saith euery þing hath tyme

For goddis sake as beth of better cheere

It is no tyme for to stody hie 8

Tel vs som mery tale by 3our fay

For what man is entred vnto play

he moot nedes vnto þat play assent

But prechith not as freres doon in lent 12

To make vs for our olde synnes wepe

Ne þat þy tale [<sup>1</sup>] tale make vs for to slepe <sup>1 by scratcht out</sup>

Tel vs som mery þing of aduentures

3oure termes 3our colours and 3our figures 16

keep hem in stoor til so be þat 3e endite

high style as whan þat men to kynges write

Spekith so playn at þis tyme we 3ow pray

That we may vnderstonde þat 3e say / 20

This worþy clerk benignely answerde /

Sir host quod he I am vnder 3our 3erde

3e haue of vs as now þe gouernaunce /

And þerfor wol I do 3ow obeissaunce 24

Als fer as resoun askith hardily  
 I wil 3ow telle a tale which þat I  
 lerned at Padowe of a worpy clerk  
 As prouyd by his wordes and his werk 28  
 he is now deed and nayled in his chest  
 Now god 3iue his soule wel good rest  
 Fraunces petrark þe laureat poete [leaf 117]  
 highte þis clerk/. whos rethorique swete 32  
 Enlumynd al ytail of poetrie  
 As linian did of philosophie  
 Or lawue or other art particulere  
 But deth þat wol not suffre vs duellen heere 36  
 But as it were a twyncling of an ye  
 hem bope hap slayn and alle schul dye  
 But forth to telle of this worpy man  
 That taughte me þis tale as I first bigan 40  
 I say þat he first with heigh stile enditith  
 Er he þe body of his tale writith  
 A proheme in the which descriuith he  
 The mounde and of Saluces þe contre 44  
 And spekith of appenyne þe hulles hye  
 That ben þe boundes of al west lombardye  
 And of mount vesulus in special  
 wher as þe poo out of a welle smal 48  
 Takith his firste springyng and his sours  
 That estward ay encresceth in his cours  
 To Emyl-ward to ferard and to venise  
 The which a long þing were to deuyse 52  
 And trewely as to my Inggement  
 Me thinkith it a þing Impertinent  
 Saue þat he wold conueyen his matiere  
 But þis is þe tale which þat 3e schuln heere 56  
 ¶ Explicit prohemium

[No break in the MS. here, or between the Stanzas following.]

## ¶ Incipit narrare

- T**her is at þe west / ende of ytaile 57  
 Doun at þe root of vesulus þe colde  
 A lusty playn abundaunt of vitaile  
 wher many a tour and toun þou maist byholde .  
 That foundid were in tyme of fadres olde . 61  
 And many anothir delitable sight  
 And Saluces þis noble contray hight 63
- A marquys whilom duellid in þat lond 64  
 As were his worpy eldris him bifore  
 And obeisaunt ay redy to his hond  
 were alle his liegis bothe lesse and more [leaf 117, back]  
 Thus in delyt he lyueth and hath don 3ore 68  
 Biloued and drad þurgh fauour and fortune  
 Boþe of his lordes and of his comune 70
- Ther with he was as to speke of lynage 71  
 The gentileste born of lumbardy  
 A fair persone . and strong and 3ong of age  
 And ful of honour and of curtesie  
 Discret ynough his contre for to gye 75  
 Sauynge in som þing he was to blame  
 And wautier was þis 3onge lordes name 77
- I blame him thus that he considered nought 78  
 In tyme comyng what mighte bityde  
 But on his lust present was al his þought  
 As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde  
 wel neigh al opir cures let he slyde 82  
 And eek he nolde þat was [1] þe worst of al <sup>1 þe was erased</sup>  
 wedde no wyf for no þing þat might bifal 84



Only þat poynt his poeple bar so sore	85
That flokmel on a day to him þay went	
And oon of hem that wisest was of lore	
Or elles þat þe lord wolde best assent	
That he schuld telle him what his poeple ment	89
Or ellis coupe he schewe wel such matiere	
he to þe marquys sayd as 3e schuln hiere	91
 O noble marquys . 3oure humanite	92
Assureth vs and 3iueth vs hardynesse	
As ofte as tyme is of necessite	
That we to 3ow may telle oure heuynesse	
Acceptith lord now . of 3our necessite	96
That we with pitous hert vnto 3ow playne	
And let 3oure eeris my vois not disdeyne	98
 And haue I nought to doon in þis matere	99
More þan anoper man hap in þis place /	
3it for as moche as 3e my lord so deere	
han alway schewed me fauour and grace	
I dar þe better ask of 3ow a space /	103
And audience to asken oure request /	
And 3e my lord to doon right as 3ow lest	[leaf 118] 105
 For certes lord so wel vs likith 3ow	106
And al 3our werk and euer han doon þat we	
Ne coupen not deuysen how	
we mighte lyue more in felicite	
Saue oon þing lord if þat 3our wille be	110
That for to be a weddid man 3ow list /	
Than were 3our peple in souereign hertes rest /	112
 Bowith 3our neck . vndir þat blisful 3ok	113
Of souereignete . nought of seruise	
which þat men clepe spousail or wedlok	
And thenkith lord among 3our þoughtes wise /	

how þat our dayes passe in sondry wyse 117  
 For þough we slepe or wake or rome aboute  
 Ay fleth þe tyme it wil no man abyde. 119

And though þour grene þouþe floure as þit 120  
 In crepith age alway as stille as stoon  
 And deth manasith euery age and smyt  
 In ech estat for þer ascapith noon  
 And as certeyn as as we knowe euerychon 124  
 That we schuln deye as vncerteyn we alle  
 Ben of þat day þat dep schal on vs falle 126

Acceptith thanne of vs þe trewe entent 127  
 That neuer þit/ refusid þoure hest  
 And we wil lord if þat þe wil assent  
 Chese þow a wyf in schort tyme atte lest  
 Born of þe gentilest and þe heighest 131  
 Of al þis lond so þat it oughte seme  
 honour to god. and þow as we can deme 133

Deliuier vs out of al þis busy drede 134  
 And tak a wyf fo hihe goddes sake /  
 For if it so bifel as god forbede  
 That þurgh þour dep þour lygnage schuld aslake  
 And þat a straunge successour schuld take 138  
 þour heritage. O. wo were vs on lyue  
 wherfor we pray þow hastily to wyue 140

Her meeke prayer. and her pitous chere 141  
 Made þe marquys for to han pite  
 þe wolde quod he. myn owne poeple deere [leaf 118, back]  
 To þat I neuer erst þought constreigne me.  
 I me reioysid of my liberte 145  
 That selden tyme is founde in mariage  
 Ther I was fre I mot ben in seruage 147

But natheles I se of þou þe trewe entent 148  
 And trust vpon þour witt and haue doon ay  
 wherfor of my fre wil I wil assent/

To wedde me as soon as euer I may  
 But þer as ȝe haue profred me to day 152  
 To chese me a wyf I wol relese  
 That choys and pray ȝow of þat/ profre cesse / 154

For god it woot þat childer ofte been 155  
 vnlik her worthy eldris hem bifore  
 Bounte comeþ al of god nought of þe streen  
 Of which thay ben engendrid and I-bore  
 I trust in goddis bounte and þerfore 159  
 My mariage and myn estat and rest  
 I him bytake . he may doon as him lest 161

Let me aloon . in chesyng of my wif 162  
 That charge vpon my bak I wil endure  
 But I ȝow pray and charge vpon þour lyf  
 That wyf þat I take ȝe me assure /  
 To worschip / whil . þat hir lif may endure 166  
 In word and werk . boþe heer and euery where /  
 As sche an Emperoures doughter were 168

And forthermor þus schul ȝe swer þat ȝe 169  
 Aȝeins my chois schuln neuer grucche ne stryue  
 For sins I schal forgo my liberte  
 At þour request as euer mot I priue  
 Ther as myn hert is set þer wil I wyue 173  
 And but ȝe wil assent in such manere  
 I pray spek no more of þis matiere 175

With hertly wil . þay sworn and assentyn 176  
 To al þis þing þer sayde no wight nay  
 Bysechyng him of grace er þat þay wentyn  
 That he wol graunten hem a certeyn day

Of his spousail as soone as euer he may 180

For ȝit alway þe peple som what dredde [leaf 119]

lest that the marquys wolde no wyf wedde 182

He graunted hem a day such as him lest 183

On which he wolde be weddid sicurly

And sayd he dede al þis at her requeste

And þay with humble hert ful buxomly

knelyng vpon her knees ful reuerently 187

him þanken alle and þus þay haue an ende

Of her entent. and hom aȝein þay wende 189

And her vpon he to his officeris 190

Comaundith for the feste to purueye

And to his priue knightes and squyeres

which charge ȝaf as him list on hem leye

And thay to his comaundement obeye / 194

And ech of hem doth his diligence

To doon vnto þe feste reuerence 196

¶ Explicit prima pars.

[No more break in the MS.]

N Ought fer fro þilke place honourable 197

wher as this marquys schop his mariage

Ther stood a thrope of sighte delitable

In which þat pore folk of þat vilage

hadden her bestes and her herburgage / 201

And after her labour took her sustienauce

After the erthe ȝaf hem abundaunce 203

Among this pore folk there duelt a man 204

which þat was holden porest of hem alle

But heighe god som tyme sende can

his grace vnto a litel oxe stalle

Ianicula men of þat throop him calle / 208

A doughter had he fair y-nough to sight

And Crisildes þis ȝonge doughter hight 210

	SIX-TEXT 410
GROUP E § 2. CLERK'S TALE. Harleian 7334.	269
But for to speke of hir vertuous beaute	211
Than was sche oon þe fayrest vnder sonne	
For porely I-fostered vp was sche	
No licorous lust was in his body ronne	
wel ofter of þe welle þan of þe tonne	215
She dronk and for sche wolde vertu please	
Sche knew wel labour but noon ydel ease	217
But þough þis mayden tender were of age [leaf 119, back]	218
þet in þe brest of her virginite	
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corrage	
And in gret reuerence and charite	
Hir olde pore fader fostred sche /	222
A fewe scheep spynnyng on þe feld sche kept	
Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slept	224
And whan sche com hom sche wolde brynge	225
wortis or oper herbis tymes ofte	
The which sche schred and seth for hir lyuyng	
And made hir bed ful hard and no þing softe	
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte	229
with euery obeissance and diligence	
That child may do to fadres reuerence	231
Vpon Grisildes þe pore creature	232
Ful ofte sithes þis marquys set his ye	
As he on huntyng rood par auenture	
And whan it fel he mighte hir espye	
he not with wantoun lokyng of folye	236
his eyzen cast vpon hir but in sad wyse	
vpon hir cheer he wold him oft advise	238
Comendyng in his hert hir wommanhede	239
And eek hir vertu passyng any oper wight	
Of so 3ong age as wel in cheer as dede	
For þough þe poeple haue no gret insight	

In vertu he considereth aright 243

Hir bounte and desposed þat he wolde  
wedde hir oonly if euer he wedde scholde 245

The day of weddyng cam but no wight can 246

Telle what womman it schulde be /  
For which meruayle wondrith many a man  
And sayden whan þay were in priuete  
wol nought our lord ȝit leue his vanite 250

wol he not wedde alas alas þe while  
why wol he þus himself and vs bigyle 252

But natheles þis marquys hap doon make 253

Of gemmes set in gold and in asure  
Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake /  
And of hir clothing took he þe mesure [leaf 120]  
By a mayde y-lik to hir of stature 257

And eek of oper ornamentes alle /  
That vnto such a weddyng schulde falle / 259

The tyme of vndern of þe same day 260

Approchith þat þis weddyng schulde be /  
And al þe palyz put was in array  
Boþe halle an chambur. ylik here degre  
houses of office stuffid with plente 264

Ther maystow se of deynteuous vitayle  
That may be founde as fer as lastith Itaile / 266

This real marquys really arrayd 267

lordes and ladyes in his compaignye  
he which vnto þe feste were prayed  
And of his retenu þe bachelerie  
with many a soun of sondry melodye 271

vnto þe vilage of which I tolde  
In þis array þe right way han þay holde 273

	SIX-TEXT 412
GROUP E § 2. CLERK'S TALE. Harleian 7334.	271
Grysild of þis god wot' ful Innocent /	274
That' for hir schapen was al þis array /	
To fecche water at' a welle is went /	
And cometh hom as soone as sche may	
For wel sche had herd sayd þat' ilke day	278
The marquys schulde wedde and if' sche might	
Sche wold haue seyen som what of þat' sight	280
Sche sayd I wol with oper maydenes stonde /	281
That' ben my felawes . in oure dore and see /	
The marquys and þerfore wol I fonde /	
To don at' hom as soone as it may be	
The labour which þat' longeth vnto me	285
And þanne may I at' leysir hir byholde	
And sche þe way in to þe castel holde /	287
And as sche wold ouer þe þreisshfold goon	288
The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle	
And sche set' doun her water-pot' anoon	
Bisides þe þreisshfold of þis oxe stalle /	
And doun vpon hir/ knees . sche gan falle	292
And with sad countenaunce knelith stille	
Til sche had herd what' was þe lordes wille [ <i>leaf 120, back</i> ]	294
This þoughtful marquys spak' vnto þis mayde	295
Ful soberly and sayd in þis manere	
wher is þour fader Grisildes he sayde	
And sche with reuerence and humble cheere	
Sayde lord he is al redy heere /	299
And in sche goth wipouten lenger let'	
And to þe marquys sche hir fader fet'	301
He by þe hond þan takith þis olde man	302
And sayde þus . whan he him had on syde /	
Ianicula I neither may ne can	
lenger þe plesauns of' myn herte hyde	

If þat 3e vouche sauf what so betyde / 306

Thy doughter wil I take er þat I wende

As for my wyf vnto hir lyues ende / 308

Thow louest me I wot it wel certeyn 309

And art my faithful liege man I-bore /

And al þat likith me I dar wel sayn

It likith þe. and specially þerfore

Tel me þat poynt. as 3e haue herd bifore 313

If þat þow wolt vnto þat purpos drawe /

To take me as for þy sone in lawe 315

The sodeyn caas þe man astoneyd þo 316

That reed he wax abaischt and al quakyng

he stood vnneþe sayd he wordes mo

But oonly þis. lord quod he my willyng

Is as 3e wol aȝenst ȝoure likyng 320

I wol no þing 3e be my lord so deere

Right as ȝow list gouernith þis matiere 322

3it wol I quod þis markys softly 323

That in þy chambre I and þou and sche /

haue a collacioun and wostow why

For I wol aske if it hir wille be

To be my wyf and reule hir after me 327

And al þis schal ben doon in þy presence

I wol nought speke out of þyn audience 329

And in þe chamber whil þay were aboute 330

her tretys which as 3e schul after hiere

The poeple cam vnto þe hous wipoute

[Line 121]

And wondrid hem in how honest manere

And tendurly sche kept hir fader deere 334

But outerly grisildes wonder might

For neuer erst ne saugh sche such a sight 336



No wonder is þough þat sche were astoned 337  
 To seen so gret a gest come in to þat place /  
 Sche neuer was to suche gestes woned  
 For which sche loked with ful pale face /  
 But shortly þis matiere forth to chace 341  
 These arn þe wordes þat þe marquys sayde /  
 To this benigne verray faithful mayde 343

Grisyld he sayde 3e schul wel vnderstonde / 344  
 It liketh to 3our fader and to me  
 That I 3ow wedde and eek it may so stonde  
 As I suppose 3e wil þat it so be /  
 But þese demaundes aske I first quod he / 348  
 That sith it schal be doon in hasty wyse  
 wol 3e assent or elles 3ow auyse / 350

I say þis be 3e redy with good hert/ 351  
 To al my lust and þat I frely may  
 As me best liste. do 3ow laughe or smert  
 And neuer 3e to gruch it night ne day  
 And eek whan I say 3e 3e say not nay 355  
 Neyther by word ne frownyng contenaunce  
 Swer þis and here swer I oure alliaunce 357

Wondryng vpon þis word quakyng for drede 358  
 Sche sayde lord vndigne and vnworthy  
 I am to thilk honour. þat 3e me bede  
 But as 3e wil 3our self right so wol I  
 And here I swere þat neuer wityngly 362  
 In werk ne thought I nyl 3ow disobeye  
 For to be deed þough me were loth to deye 364

This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he / 365  
 And forth goth he wip a ful sobre chere  
 Out at þe dore and after þat cam sche  
 And to þe pepul he sayd in þis manere .

This is my wyf quod he þat stondith heere 369  
 honoureth hir and loueth hir I 3ow pray [leaf 121, back]  
 who so me loueth þer is no more to say 371

And for þat no þing of hir olde gere 372  
 Sche schulde brynge vnto his hous he bad  
 That wommen schuld despoilen hir right þere  
 Of which þese ladyes were nought ful glad  
 To handle hir clopes wher-in sche was clad 376  
 But natheles þis mayde bright of hew  
 Fro foot to heed þay schredde han al newe 378

Hir heeres han þay kempt þat lay vntressed 379  
 Ful rudely and with hir fynGRES smale  
 A coroun on hir heed þay han I-dressed  
 And set hir ful of nowches gret and smale  
 Of hir array what schuld I make a tale / 383  
 Vnnethe þe poeple hir knew for hir fairnesse /  
 whan sche translated was in such richesse / 385

This marquis haþ hir spoused with a ryng 386  
 Brought for þe same cause and þan hir sette  
 vpon an hors snow-whyte and wel amblyng  
 And to his palys er he lenger lette  
 with ioyful poeple þat hir ladde and mette 390  
 Conueyed hire and þus þe day þay spende  
 In reuel til þe sonne gan descende 392

And schortly þis tale for to chace 393  
 I say þat to þis newe marquisesse  
 God hath schewed fauour and sent hir of his grace  
 That it semyd not by liklynesse  
 That sche was born and fed in rudenesse 397  
 As in a cote or in an Oxe stalle  
 But norischt in an emperoures halle 399

To euery wight<sup>t</sup> sche waxen is so deere 400  
 And worschipful þat<sup>t</sup> folk<sup>t</sup> þer sche was born  
 And from hir burthe knew hir 3er by 3ere  
 Vnneth trowed þay but<sup>t</sup> dorst<sup>t</sup> han sworn  
 That<sup>t</sup> to Ianicle of<sup>t</sup> which I spak<sup>t</sup> biforn 404  
 Sche doughter were . for as by coniecture  
 Hem þought<sup>t</sup> sche was anoper creature 406

For þough þat<sup>t</sup> euer vertuous was sche 407  
 Sche was encresed in such excellence [leaf 122]  
 Of thewes goode i-set<sup>t</sup> in high bounte  
 And so discret and fair of<sup>t</sup> eloquence  
 So benigne and so digne of<sup>t</sup> reuerence 411  
 And couþe so þe poeples hert<sup>t</sup> embrace  
 That<sup>t</sup> ech hir loueþ þat<sup>t</sup> lokith in hir face 413

Nought<sup>t</sup> oonly of<sup>t</sup> Saluce in þe toun 414  
 Pupilissched was þe bounte of<sup>t</sup> hir name  
 But<sup>t</sup> eek<sup>t</sup> byside in many a regioun  
 If<sup>t</sup> oon sayd wel anoper sayd þe same  
 So sprad of<sup>t</sup> hire heigh bounte þe fame / 418  
 That<sup>t</sup> men and wommen as wel 3ong<sup>t</sup> as olde  
 Gon to Saluce vpon hir to byholde 420

This walter louly . nay but<sup>t</sup> really 421  
 weddid with fortunat<sup>t</sup> honestete  
 In goddes pees lyueth ful esily  
 At<sup>t</sup> home and outward grace ynough hap he  
 And for he saugh þat vnder low degre 425  
 was ofte vertu y-hid þe poeple him helde  
 A prudent<sup>t</sup> man and þat<sup>t</sup> is seint<sup>t</sup> ful selde 427

Nought<sup>t</sup> oonly þis Grisildes þurgh hit<sup>t</sup> witte 428  
 Couthe al þe feet<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> wifly humblesse /  
 But<sup>t</sup> eek<sup>t</sup> whan þat þe tyme required it<sup>t</sup>  
 The comun profyt<sup>t</sup> couthe sche redresse

Ther nas discord rancour ne heuynesse / 432  
 In al þat lond þat sche ne coupe appese /  
 And wisly bryng' hem alle in rest' and ese 434  
 Though þat hir housbond absent' were anoon 435  
 If gentil men or oþer of hir contre  
 were wroth sche wolde brynge hem at oon  
 So wyse and rype wordes hadde sche  
 And Iuggement' of so gret' equite 439  
 That' sche from heuen sent' was as men wende /  
 Poeple to saue and euery wrong' to amende 441  
 Nought' longe tyme after þat þis Grisilde 442  
 was wedded sche a douȝter hap I-bore  
 Al had hir leuer han had a knaue childe  
 Glad was þis marquis and þe folk' þerfore  
 For though a mayden child come al byfore / [U<sup>122</sup>, bk] 446  
 Sche may vnto a knaue child atteigne  
 By liklihed and sche nys not' bareigne 448

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit Tercia pars.

**T**her fel as fallith many tymes mo 449  
 whan þat þis child hap souked but' a þrowe  
 This marquys in his herte longith so  
 Tempte his wyf. hir sadnesse for to knowe  
 That' he ne might' out' of his herte þrowe 453  
 This meruaylous desir his wyf tassaye  
 Now god wot' he þought' hir to affraye 455  
 He had assayed hir ynough bifore 456  
 And fond hir euer good what' needith it/  
 hire to tempte. and alway more and more  
 Though som men prayse it' for a subtil wit'  
 But' as for me I say that' euel it' sit' 460  
 Tassay a wyf whan þat it is no neede  
 And putte hir in anguysch and in dreede 462

For which þis marquis wrouȝt in þis manere 463  
 he com aloone a night þer as sche lay /  
 wiþ sterne face and with ful trouble cheere  
 And sayde þus Grisild quod he þat day /  
 þat I ȝow took out of ȝour pore array / 467  
 And putte ȝow in estat of heigh noblesse  
 ȝe haue not þat. forgotten as I gesse / 469

I say Grisild þis present dignite 470  
 In which þat I haue put ȝow as I trowe  
 Makith ȝow not. forȝetful for to be  
 þat I ȝow took in pore estat ful lowe  
 For eny wele ȝe moot ȝour selue knowe / 474  
 Tak heed of euery word þat/ I ȝow say /  
 Ther is no wight þat herith it but we tway / 476

ȝe wot ȝour self. how ȝe comen heere 477  
 In to þis hous it is nouȝt long ago  
 And þough to me þat ȝe be leef and deere  
 vnto my gentils ȝe be no þing so  
 Thay seyn to hem it is gret schame and wo 481  
 For to ben subiect/. and ben in seruage /  
 To the þat born art of a smal village [leaf 123] 483

And namely syn þy doughter was I-bore 484  
 These wordes han þay spoken douteles  
 But I desire as I haue doon byfore  
 To lyue my lif with hem in rest and pees  
 I may not in þis caas be reccheles 488  
 I moot do with þy doughter for þe best/  
 Not as I wolde but as my pepul lest 490

And ȝit god wot þis is ful loth to me 491  
 But napeles wiþoute ȝoure witynge  
 wol I not doon. but þis wold I quod he /  
 That ȝe to me assent as in þis þing /

Schew now þour paciens in þour wirching' 495

þat þou me hightest' and swor in þon village

That day þat maked was oure mariage 497

Whan sche had herd al þis sche nouȝt' ameeuyd 498

Neyþer in word in cheer or countenaunce

For as it semed sche was nouȝt' agreeued

She sayde lord al lith in þour plesaunce

My child and I with hertly obeisaunce 502

Ben þoures al . and ȝe may saue or spille

þour oughne þing' . werkþ after þour wille / 504

Ther may no þing' so god my soule saue 505

liken to ȝow þat may displesen me

Ne I desire no þing' for to haue

Ne drede for to lese saue oonly ȝe

This wil is in myn hert' and ay schal be 509

No length of tyme or dep may þis deface /

Ne chaunge my corrage to oþer place / 511

Glad was this marquis of hir answeyng' 512

But ȝit he feyned as he were not' so

Al dreery was his cheer and his lokyng'

whan þat he schold out of þe Chambre go

Soon after þis a forlong' way or tuo 516

he priuely hap told al his entent

vnto aman . and vnto his wyf' him sent' 518

A maner Sergeant' was þis priue man 519

The which þat faithful oft' he founden hadde

In þinges grete . and eek' such folk wel can [leaf 123, back]

Don execucioun in þinges badde

The lord knew wel þat he him loued and dradde 523

And whan þis sergeant' wist' his lordes wille

In to þe chamber he stalked him ful stille . 525

Ma dame he sayd ȝe most forȝiue it me 526  
 Though I do þing. to which I am constreynit.  
 ȝe ben so wys þat ful wel knowe ȝe  
 þat lordes hestes mow not ben I-feynit  
 Thay mowe wel biwayl it or compleyn it/ 530  
 But men moot neede vnto her lust obeye  
 And so wol I þer is no more to seye 532

This child I am comaundid for to take / 533  
 And spak no more. but out þe child he hent  
 Dispitously and gan a chiere make  
 As þough he wold han slayn it er he went  
 Grisild moot al suffer and al consent 537  
 And as a lamb sche sitteth meeke and stille /  
 And let þis cruel sergeant doon his wille 539

Suspecious was þe defame of þis man 540  
 Suspect his face. suspect his word also /  
 Suspect þe tyme. in which he þis bigan  
 Allas hir doughter þat she loued so  
 Sche wend he wold han slayen it right þo 544  
 But napeles sche neyþer weep ne siked  
 Conformyng hir to þat þe marquis liked 546

But atte last speke sche bigan 547  
 And mekely sche to þe sergeant preyde  
 So as he was a worþy gentil man  
 That she most kisse hir child er þat it deyde  
 And on hir arm þis litel child sche leyde 551  
 wiþ ful sad face. and gan þe child to blesse  
 And lullyd it and after gan it kesse / 553

And þus sche sayd in hir benigne vois 554  
 Far wel my child I schal þe neuer see /  
 But sith I þe haue marked wiþ þe croys /  
 Of þilke fader blessed mot þou be

That for vs deyde vpon a cros of tre 558  
 Thy soule litel child . I him bytake [leaf 124]  
 For þis night schaltow deyen for my sake / 560

I trowe þat to a norice in þis caas 561  
 It had ben hard þis rewthe for to see  
 wel might a moder þan haue cryed alas  
 But napeles so sad stedefast was sche  
 þat she endured al aduersite 565  
 And to þe sergeant mekely sche sayde /  
 Haue her agayn þour litel þonge mayde 567

Goth now quod sche and dop my lordes heste 568  
 But o þing wil I pray þow of þour grace  
 þat but my lord forbede þow atte leste  
 Burieth þis litel body in som place  
 That bestes ne no briddes it to-race / 572  
 But he no word wil to þe purpos say /  
 But took þe child and went vpon his way 574

This sergeant com vnto þis lord agayn 575  
 And of Grisildes wordes and hir cheere  
 He tolde poynt for poynt in schort and playn  
 And him presentith with his douzter deere  
 Som what þis lord hath rewthe in his manere 579  
 But napeles his purpos huld he stille /  
 As lordes doon whan þay woln haue her wille 581

And bad þe sergeaunt þat he priuely 582  
 Scholde þis childe softe wynde and wrappe /  
 with alle circumstaunces tendurly  
 And cary it in a cofre or in his lappe  
 Vpon peyne his heed of for to swappe 586  
 That no man schulde knowe of þis entent  
 Ne whens he com . ne whider þat he went 588



But at Boloyne to his suster deere 589  
 That pilke tyme of panik' was Countesse  
 He schuld it' take and schewe hir þis matiere  
 Byseching' her to doon hir busynesse  
 This child to fostre in alle gentillesse 593  
 And whos child þat it was he bad hir hyde  
 From euery wight' for ought þat' mighte bytyde 595  
 The sergeant' goþ and hap' fulfild þis þing' 596  
 But' to þis marquys now retourne we [leaf 124, back]  
 For now goþ he ful fast' ymaginyng'  
 If' by his wyues cher he mighte se  
 Or by hir word apparceyue þat sche 600  
 were chaunged. but he hir neuer coupe fynde  
 But' euer in oon y-like sad and kynde / 602  
 As glad as humble as busy in seruise / 603  
 And eek' in loue as sche was wont' to be  
 was sche to him in euery maner wyse /  
 Ne of' hir doughter nouȝt' o word spak' sche  
 Non accident/ for noon aduersite 607  
 was seyn in hir ne neuer hir doughter name  
 Ne nempnyd sche. in earnest' ne in game 609

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit. Quarta pars.

**I**N þis estaat' þer passed ben foure ȝer 610  
 Er sche wiþ childe was. but' as god' wolde  
 A knaue child sche bar by þis waltier  
 Ful gracious and fair for to biholde  
 And whan þat' folk' it/ to his fader tolde 614  
 Nouȝt' oonly he. but' al his contre merye  
 was for þis child and god' þay þank' and herie 616  
 When it' was tuo ȝer old and fro þe brest' 617  
 Departed fro his noris vpon a day  
 This markys caughte ȝit another lest'

To tempt' his wif' ȝit' after if' he may  
 O needles was sche tempted in assay 621  
 But' weddid men ne knowen no mesure  
 whan þat' þay fynde . a pacient' creature 623

Wyf' quod þis marquys ȝe han herd er þis 624  
 My peple sekly berith oure mariage  
 And namly syn . my sone y-boren is  
 Now is it' wors þan euer in al our age  
 The murmur slep myn hert and my corrage 628  
 For to myn eeris cometh þe vois so smerte  
 þat' it' wel neigh destroyed hap myn herte . 630

Now say þay þus whan wauter is a goon 631  
 Than schal þe blood of Ianicula succede  
 And ben our lord for oper haue we noon.  
 Suche wordes saith my poeple out/ of drede / [leaf 125]  
 wel ought' I of such murmur taken heede 635  
 For certeynly I drede such sentence  
 þough þay not pleyndly speke in myn audience / 637

I wolde lyue in pees if' þat' I might' 638  
 wher for I am disposid outrely  
 As I his suster seruede by night  
 Right' so þynk' I to serue him priuely  
 This warn I ȝou þat' ȝe not' sodeinly 642  
 Out' of ȝour self' for no þing' schuld outraye  
 Beþ pacient and þer of I ȝow pray 644

I haue quod sche sayd þus and euer schal 645  
 I wol no þing' ne nil no þing' certayn  
 But' as ȝow list' . nought' greueth me at al  
 Though þat' my doughter and my sone be slayn .  
 At' ȝour comaundement' þis is to sayne 649  
 I haue no had no part of children twayne  
 But' first' syknes and after wo and payne / 651

3e ben oure lord doth with 3our owne þing' 652  
 Right' as 3ow list' axith no red of' me  
 For as I left' at hom al my cloþing'  
 whan I first' com to 3ow right' so quod sche  
 Left' I my wille and my liberte / 656  
 And took' 3our cloþing'. wher for I 3ow preye  
 Doþ 3oure plesaunce. I wil 3oure lust' obeye 658  
  
 And certes if' I hadde prescience 659  
 3our wil to knowe. er 3e 3oure lust' me tolde  
 I wold it doon wiþoute negligence  
 But' now I wot' 3our lust' and what' 3e wolde  
 Al 3our plesaunce ferm and stable I holde 663  
 For wist' I þat' my deth wold don 3ow ease  
 Right' gladly wold I deye 3ow to please 665  
  
 Deth may make no comparisoun 666  
 vnto 3our loue and whan þis marquys say  
 The constance of' his wyf' he cast' a doun  
 His eyzen tuo and wondrith þat' sche may  
 In pacience suffre al þis array 670  
 And forth he goþ with drery countenaunce  
 But to his hert' it' was ful gret' plesaunce [*leaf 125, back*] 672  
  
 This Igly sergeaunt in þe same wise 673  
 That' he hir doughter fette. right' so he  
 Or worse if' men worse can deuyse  
 hath hent hir sone þat ful was of' beaute  
 And euer in oon so pacient' was sche 677  
 That' sche nõ cheere made of' heuynesse  
 But' kist' hir sone. and after gan him blesse 679  
  
 Saue þis sche prayed him if' þat' he mighte 680  
 her litel sone he wold in eorþe graue  
 His tendre lymes delicate to sight  
 From foules and from bestes him to saue

But sche noon answer of him mighte haue 684  
 he went his way as him no þing ne rought  
 But to Boloyne he tenderly it brought 686

This marquis wondreth euer þe lenger þe more 687  
 vpon hir pacience. and if þat he  
 Ne hadde soply knowen þer bifore  
 þat parfytly hir children loued sche  
 he wold haue wend þat of som subtilte 691  
 And malice or of cruel corrage  
 That sche had suffred þis wiþ sad visage 693

But wel he knew þat next himself certayn 694  
 Sche loued hir children best in euery wise  
 But now of wommen wold I aske fayn  
 If þese assayes mighten not suffice  
 what coupe a stourdy housebonde more deuyse 698  
 To prove hir wyfhode and her stedefastnesse /  
 And he contynuyng euer in stourdynesse 700

But þer ben folk of such condicioun 701  
 That whan þay haue a certeyn purpos take  
 Thay can nought stynt of her entencioun  
 But right as þay were bounden to a stake /  
 þay wil not of her firste purpos slake 705  
 Right so þis marquys fullich hap purposed  
 To tempt his wyf as he was first disposed 707

He wayteth if by word or countenaunce 708  
 That sche to him was chaunged of corage  
 But neuer coupe he fynde variaunce [leaf 126]  
 Sche was ay oon in hert and in visage  
 And ay þe ferþer þat sche was in age / 712  
 The more trewe if þat it were possible /  
 Sche was to him and more penyble. 714

For which it semyd þis þat of hem tuo 715  
þer nas but oo wil for as walter lest/  
The same plesaunce was hir lust also  
And god by thanked al fel for þe best/  
Sche schewed wel. for no worldly vnrest 719  
A wyf as of hir self no þing ne scholde  
wylne in effect. but as hir housbond wolde 721

The sclander of walter ofte and wyde spradde 722  
That of a cruel hert he wikkedly  
For he a pore womman weddid hadde  
hath morthrid boþe his children priuely  
Such murmur was among hem comunly 726  
No wonder is for to þe peples eere  
Ther com no word. but þat þay morthrid were / 728

For which wher as his peple þer byfore 729  
had loued him wel þe sclander of his diffame  
Made hem þat þay him hatede þefore  
To ben a morderer. is an hateful name  
But napeles for earnest or for game 733  
he of his cruel purpos nolde stente  
To tempt his wyf was set al his entente 735

Whan þat his doughter twelf þer was of age 736  
he to þe court of Rome in suche wise  
Enformed of his wille sent his message  
Comaundyng hem. such bulles to denyse  
As to his cruel purpos may suffise 740  
how þat þe pope as for his peples reste  
Bad him to wedde anoþer if him leste 742

I say he bad þay schulde countrefete 743  
The popes bulles makyng mencioun  
That he hap leue his firste wyf to lete  
As by þe popes dispensacioun

To stynte rancour and discencioun 747  
 Bitwix his peple and him þus sayd þe bulle [leaf 128, back]  
 The which þay han publisshid atte fulle / 749

The rude poepel as it no wonder is 750  
 wende ful wel þat it had be right so  
 But whan þese tydynges come to Grisildis  
 I deeme þat hir herte was ful wo  
 But sche y-like sad for euermo 754  
 Disposid was þis humble creature  
 Thaduersite of fortun al tendure 756

A bydyng euer his lust and his plesaunce 757  
 To whom þat sche was ȝiue hert and al  
 As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce  
 But schortly if I þis story telle schal  
 This marquys writen hap in special 761  
 A letter in which he schewith his entent  
 And secrely he to Boloyne it sent / 763

To therl of panyk/ which þat hadde þo 764  
 weddid his suster prayd he specially  
 To brynge hom aȝein his children tuo  
 In honorable estaat al openly  
 But oon þing he him prayde outerly 768  
 That he to no wight þough men wold enquere  
 Schuld not tellen. whos children þay were 770

But say þe mayde. schuld I-weddid be 771  
 vnto þe markys of Saluce anoon  
 And as þis eorl was prayd so dede he  
 For at day set. he on his way is goon  
 Toward Saluce and lordes many oon 775  
 In riche array þis mayden for to guyde  
 hir ȝonge broþer rydyng by hir syde 777

Arrayed was toward hir mariage 778  
 This freisshe may al ful of gemmes clere  
 hir broþer which þat. seuen 3er was of age  
 Arrayed eek. ful freissh in his manere /  
 And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere 782  
 Toward Saluces schapyng her iournay  
 Fro day to day þay ryden in her way 784

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Incipit pars Quinta.

**A** Mong al þis after his wikked vsage [leaf 127] 785  
 This marquis 3it his wif to tempte more  
 To þe vttrest proof of hir corrage  
 Fully to han experiens and lore  
 If þat sche were as stedefast as byfore 789  
 He on a day in open audience  
 Ful boystously hap sayd hir þis sentence 791  
 Certes Grisildes I had ynough plesaunce 792  
 To haue 3ow to my wif for 3our goodnesse  
 And for 3oure troupe and for 3our obeissaunce  
 Nought for 3our lignage ne for 3our richesse  
 But now know I in verray sothfastnesse / 796  
 That in gret lordschip if I wel auyse /  
 Ther is gret seruise in sondry wyse / 798  
 I may not do as euery plough man may 799  
 My poeple me constreignith for to take  
 Anoper wyf and certeyn day by day  
 And eek þe popes rancour for to slake  
 Consentith it þat dar I vndertake 803  
 And trewely þus moche I wol 3ow say  
 My newe wif is comyng by þe way 805  
 Be strong of hert and voyde anon hir place 806  
 And pilke dower þat 3e broughten me  
 Tak it agayn I graunt it of my grace

Retourneth to 3our fadres hous quod he  
 No man may alway haue prosperite 810  
 with euen hert' I rede 3ow endure  
 The strok' of fortune or of aduenture 812

And sche agayn answerd in pacience 813  
 My lord quod sche I wot' and wist/ alway  
 how þat' bitwixe 3our magnificence  
 And my pouerte no wight' can ne may  
 Make comparisoun it' is no nay 817  
 ¶ I. ne held me neuer digne in no manere  
 To ben 3our wyf' ne 3it' 3our Chamberere 819

And in þis hous þer 3e me lady made / 820  
 The highe god take I for my witnesse  
 And al so wisly he my soule glade  
 I neuer huld me lady ne maistresse / [leaf 127, back]  
 But' humble seruaunt' to 3our worthinesse 824  
 And euer schal whil þat/ my lyf' may dure  
 Abouen euery worldly creature 826

That' 3e so longe of 3our benignite 827  
 han holden me in honour and nobleye  
 wher as I was not' worthy for to be  
 That' þonk' I god and 3ow to whom I preye  
 For3eld it' 3ow þer is more to seye 831  
 vnto my fader gladly wil I wende  
 And with him duelle vnto my lyues ende / 833

Ther I was fostred as a child ful smal 834  
 Til I be deed my lyf' ther wil I lede  
 A widow clene in body hert and al  
 For sith I 3af' to 3ow my maydenhede  
 And am 3our trewe wyf' it is no drede 838  
 God schilde such a lordes wyf' to take  
 Anoper man to housbond or to make 840



And of þour newe wif. god of his grace 841  
 So graunte þow. wele and prosperite  
 For I wol gladly zelden hir my place  
 I which þat I was blisful wont to be  
 For sith it liketh þow my lord quod sche 845  
 That whilom were al myn hertes reste  
 That I schal gon. I wil go whan þow leste 847

But þer as þe profre me such dowayre / 848  
 As I ferst brought. it is wel in my mynde  
 It were my wrecchid cloþes no þing faire  
 þe whiche to me were hard now for to fynde  
 O goode god. how gentil and how kynde 852  
 þe semed by þour speche and þour visage  
 That day þat maked was our mariage 854

But soþ is sayd algate I fynd it trewe / 855  
 For in effect. it/ proued is on me  
 loue is nought old. as whan þat it is newe/  
 But certes lord for noon aduersite /  
 To deyen in þe caas it schal not be / 859  
 þat euer in word or werk I schal repente  
 That I þow ȝaf myn hert in hol entente [leaf 128] 861

My lord þe wot þat in my fadres place 862  
 þe dede me strippe out of my pore wede  
 And richely me cladden of þour grace  
 To þow brought I nought elles out of drede  
 But faith and mekenes and maydenhede / 866  
 And her agayn my cloþyng I restore  
 And eek my weddyng ryng for euermore 868

The remenant of þour jewels redy be / 869  
 wiþin þour chambur dore dar I saufly sayn  
 Naked out of my fadres hous quod sche /  
 I com and naked moot I torne agayn

Al 3our pleisauns . wold I fulfille fayn 873

But 3it I hope it be not 3oure entent

That I smocles out of 3our chambre went 875

3e coupe not doon so dishonest a þing 876

þat þilke wombe in which 3our children leye

Schulde byforn þe poeple in my walkyng

Be seye al bare wher-fore I 3ow pray

let me not lik a worm go by þe way / 880

Remembre 3ow myn oughne lord so deere /

I was 3our wyf . þough I vnworpy were 882

Wherfor in guerdoun of my maydenhede 883

which þat I brought and nought agayn I bere

As voucheth sauf . as 3eue me to my ineede

Such a smok as I was wont to were

That I þer with may wrye þe wombe of here / 887

þat was 3our wif and here take I my leue

Of 3ow myn oughne lord . lest I 3ow greue 889

The smok quod he þat þou hast on þy bak 890

let it be stille and ber it forþ wiþ þe

But wel vnnethes þilke word he spak

But went his way for routhe and for pite

Byforn þe folk hir seluen strippith sche / 894

And in hir smok . wiþ heed and foot al bare

Toward hir fader house forth is sche fare 896

The folk hir folwen wepyng in hir weye 897

And fortune ay þay cursen as þay goon

But/ sche fro wepyng kept hir eyen dreye [leaf 128, back]

Ne in þis tyme word ne spak sche noon

hir fader þat þis tyding herd anoon 901

Cursed þe day and tyme þat nature

Schoop him to ben a lyues creature 903

For out of doute þis olde þore man 904  
 was euer in suspect of hir mariage  
 For euer he deemed sith þat it bigan  
 That whan þe lord fulfilled had his corrage  
 him wolde þinke þat it were disparage 908  
 To his estate . so lowe for to light  
 And voyden hire as sone as euer he might 910

Agayns his doughter hastily quod he 911  
 For he by noyse of folk knew hir comyng  
 And wip hir olde cote as it might be /  
 he couered hir ful sorwfully wepynge  
 But on hir body might he it nouȝt bringe 915  
 For rude was þe cloth . and sche mor of age  
 By deyes fele . þan hir mariage 917

Thus with hir fader for a certeyn space 918  
 Dwellith þis flour of wifly pacience  
 That neyther by her wordes ne by hir face  
 Byforn þe folk nor eek in her absence  
 Ne schewed sche that hir was doon offence 922  
 Ne of hir highe astat no remembraunce  
 Ne hadde sche . as by hir countenaunce 924

No wonder is for in hir gret estate 925  
 hir gost was euer in playn humilite  
 Ne tender mouth noon herte delicate  
 Ne pompe . ne semblant of realte  
 But ful of pacient benignite 929  
 Discrete and prideles ay honorable /  
 And to hir housbond euer meke and stable 931

Men speke of Iob . and most for his humblesse / 932  
 As clerkes whan hem lust can wel endite  
 Namely of men . but as in sothfastnesse  
 þough clerkes prayse wommen but a lite

þer can no man in humblesse him acquyte 936  
 As wommen can . ne can be half so trewe [leaf 129]  
 As wommen ben . but it be falle of newe 938

[No break in the MS.]

Fro boloyne is þis erl of panik y-come 939  
 Of which þe fame vp sprong to more and lasse  
 And to þe poeples eeres alle and some  
 was couth eek þat a newe marquisesse  
 he wip him brought in such pomp and richesse 943  
 That neuer was þer seyn with mannes ye  
 So noble array in al west lombardy 945

The marquys which þat schoop and knew al þis 946  
 Er þat þis erl was come sent his message /  
 After þilk cely pore Grisildis  
 And sche wip humble hert and good visage  
 Not with so swollen hert in hir corrage 950  
 Cam at his hest . and on hir knees hir sette  
 And reuerently and wyfly sche him grette 952

Grisild quod he . my wil is outrely 953  
 This mayden þat schal weddid be to me  
 Receyued be to morwe as really  
 As it possible is in myn hous to be  
 And eek þat euery wight in his degre 957  
 haue his estaat in sittyng and seruyse  
 In high plesaunce as I can deuyse 959

I haue no womman suffisant certeyne 960  
 The chambres for tarray in ordinance  
 After my lust and þerfor wold I feyne /  
 That þin were al such maner gouernaunce  
 Thow knowest / eek of al my plesaunce 964  
 Though þyn array be badde and ille byseye  
 Do þou þy deuer atte leste weye 966

Nought oonly lord þat I am glad quod sche / 967  
 To don 3our lust. but I desire also /  
 3ow for to serue and plesse in my degre  
 wipoute feynyng and schal euer mo  
 Ne neuer for no wele ne for no wo 971  
 Ne schal þe gost wipinne myn herte stente /  
 To loue 3ow best wip al my trewe entent 973

And wip þat word sche gan þe hous to dight 974  
 And tables for to sette and beddes make [leaf 129, back]  
 And peyned hir to doon al þat sche might  
 Preying þe chamberers for goddes sake  
 To hasten hem and faste swepe and schake 978  
 And sche þe moste seruisable of alle /  
 hap euery chamber arrayed and his halle / 980

Abouten vnder gan þis lord alight 981  
 þat with him brought þese noble children tweye  
 For which þe peple ran to se þat sight  
 Of her array so richely biseye  
 And þan at erst amonges hem þay seye 985  
 That walter was no forþ þough that him lest  
 To chaunge his wyf. for it was for þe best / 987

For sche is fairer. as þay demen alle / 988  
 Than is Grisild and more tender of age  
 And fairer fruyt bitwen hem schulde falle  
 And more plesaunt for hir high lynage  
 hir broþer eek. so fair was of visage 992  
 That hem to seen þe peple hap caught plesaunce  
 Comending now þe marquys gouernaunce 994

O stormy poeple. vnsad and euer vntrewe 995  
 And vndiscret and chaungyng as a fane  
 Desyryng euer in rombel þat is newe  
 For lik þe moone ay wax 3e and wane

Ay ful of clappyng' dere ynough a Iane 999  
 3oure doom is fals 3our constaunce yuel preuith  
 A ful gret' fool is he that' on 3ow leeuith 1001

Thus sayde saad folk in þat Citee 1002  
 whan þat' þe poeple gased vp and down  
 For þay were glad right' of þe nouelte  
 To han a newe lady of her toun  
 No more of þis now make I mencioune 1006  
 But' to Grisildes agayn wol I me dresse  
 And telle hir constance and hir busynesse / 1008

Ful busy was grisild in euery þing' 1009  
 That' to þe feste was appertinent  
 Right' nought' was sche abaisht' of hir cloþing'  
 Though it were ruyde. and som del eek' torent  
 But' wiþ glad cheer to þe 3ate is sche went [leaf 130] 1013  
 with oþer folk' to griete þe marquisesse  
 And after þat' doth forth hir busynesse / 1015

With so glad chier his gestes sche receyueth 1016  
 And so connyngly euerich in his degre /  
 That' no defaute no man aparceyueth  
 But' ay þay wondren what' sche mighte be  
 That' in so pouer array was for to se 1020  
 And couþe such honour and reuerence  
 And worthily þay prayse hir prudence 1022

In al þis mene while sche ne stent 1023  
 This mayde and eek' hir brother to comende  
 with al hir hert'. in ful buxom entent  
 So wel þat' no man couþe hir pris amende  
 But' atte last' whan þat' þese lordes wende 1027  
 To sitte doun to mete he gan to calle /  
 Grisild as sche was busy in his halle 1029

Grisyld quod he as it were in his play 1030

how likith þe my wif and hir beaute

Right wel my lord quod sche for in good fay

A fairer saugh I neuer noon þan sche

I pray to god ȝiue hir prosperite 1034

And so hope I. þat he wol to ȝow sende

Plesaunce ynough vnto ȝour lyues ende / 1036

On þing warn I ȝow and biseke also / 1037

That ȝe ne prike wiþ no tormentynge

þis tendre mayden as ȝe haue do mo

For sche is fostrid in hir norischinge

More tendrely and to my supposynge / 1041

Sche coupe not aduersite endure

As coupe a pore fostrid creature 1043

And whan þis walter saugh hir pacience 1044

hir glade cheer and no malice at al

And he so oft had doon to hir offence

And sche ay sad. and constant as a wal

Continuyng euer hir Innocence oueral 1048

This sturdy marquys gan his herte dresse

To Rewen vpon hir wyfly stedefastnesse / 1050

This is ynough Grisilde myn quod he [leaf 130, back] 1051

Be now no more agast ne yuel apayed

I haue thy faith and þy benignite

As wel as euer womman was assayed

In gret estate and propreliche arrayed 1055

Now knowe I dere wyf þy stedefastnesse

And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse 1057

And sche for wonder took of it no keepe 1058

Sche herde not what þing he to hir sayde

Sche ferd as sche had start out of a sleepe

Til sche out of hir masidnesse abrayde

Grisild quod he by god þat for vs deyde 1062  
 Thou art my wyf ne noon oþer I haue  
 Ne neuer had as god my soule saue 1064

This is my doughter which þou hast supposed 1065  
 To be my wif þat oþer faithfully  
 Schal be myn heir as I haue ay purposed  
 Thow bar hem in þy body trewely  
 At Boloyne haue I kept hem priuely 1069  
 Tak hem agayn for now maistow not seye  
 That þou hast lorn noon of þy children tweye 1071

And folk þat oþer weyes han seyde of me 1072  
 I warn hem wel þat I haue doon þis deede  
 For no malice ne for no cruelte  
 But for tassaye in þe þy wommanhede  
 And not to slen my children god forbode 1076  
 But for to kepe hem priuely and stille  
 Til I þy purpos knowe and al þy wille 1078

Whan sche þis herd a swoned down sche fallith 1079  
 For pitous ioy. and after her swownyng  
 Sche bothe hir ȝonge children to hir callith  
 And in hir armes pitously wepyng  
 Embraseth hem and tenderly kysyng 1083  
 Ful lik a moder with hir salte teris  
 Sche bathis boþe hir visage and hir eeris 1085

O such a pitous þing it was to see<sup>1</sup>  
 hir swownyng and hir humble vois to heere  
 Graunt mercy lord. god thank it ȝow quod sche [leaf 131]  
 That ȝe han kept my children so deere  
 Now rek I neuer to be deed right heere 1090  
 Sith I stond in ȝour loue and in ȝour grace  
 No fors of deth ne whan my spirit pace 1092

[<sup>1</sup> This line is repeated  
 in the MS., but has  
 been scratcht out.]



- O** tender deere . 3onge children myne 1093  
 3oure woful moder wende stedefastly  
 That' cruel houndes or som foul vermyne  
 had eten 3ow but' god of' his mercy  
 And 3our benigne fader tenderly 1097  
 hath doon 3ow kept' and in þat' same stounde  
 Al sodeinly sche swapped down to grounde / 1099
- A**nd in hir swough so sadly holdith sche 1100  
 hir children tuo . whan sche gan hem tembrace  
 That' with gret' sleight' and gret' difficulte  
 The children from her am þay gonne arace  
 O many a teer . o many a pitous face . 1104  
 Doun ran of' hem þat' stoodon hir bisyde  
 Vnnethe aboute hir mighte þay abyde 1106
- W**altier hir gladith and hir sorwe slakith 1107  
 Sche rysith vp abaissed from hir traunce  
 And euery wight' hir ioy and feste makith  
 Til sche hath caught' agayn hir continuaunce  
 wauter hir doth so faithfully plesaunce 1111  
 That' it was daynte for to see þe cheere  
 Bitwix hem tuo . now þay be met' in feere 1113
- T**hese ladys whan þat' þay her tyme say 1114  
 han taken hir and in to chambre goon  
 And strippen hir . out' of' hir rude array  
 And in a cloth of' gold þat' brighte schon  
 with a coroun of' many a riche stoon 1118  
 vpon hir heed þay in to halle hir brought  
 And þer sche was honoured as hir ought 1120
- T**hus hath þis pitous day a blisful ende 1121  
 For euery man and womman doth his might  
 This day in mirth and revel to despende  
 Til on þe welken schon þe sterres bright

For more solempne in euery mannes sight 1125  
 This feste was and gretter of costage [leaf 131, back]  
 Than was þe reuel of hir mariage / 1127

Ful many a ȝer in heigh prosperite 1128  
 lyuen þese tuo in concord and in rest  
 And richeliche his doughter married he  
 vnto a lord on of þe worthiest  
 Of al ytaile and þanne in pees and rest 1132  
 His wyues fader in his court he kepith  
 Til þat þe soule out of his body crepith 1134

His sone succedith in his heritage 1135  
 In rest and pees. after his fader day  
 And fortunat. was eek in mariage  
 Al put he not his wyf in gret assay  
 This world is not so strong it is no nay 1139  
 As it hap ben in olde tymes ȝore  
 And herknith what þis auctor saith þerfore 1141

This story is sayd nat for þat wyues scholde 1142  
 Folwe Grisild. as in humilite  
 For it were importable þough þay wolde  
 But for þat euery wight in his degre  
 Schulde be constant. in aduersite 1146  
 As was Grisild. therfore Petrark writeth  
 This story which wip high stile he enditeth 1148

For swich a womman was so pacient 1149  
 vnto a mortal man wel more vs oughte  
 Receyuen al in gre þat god vs sent  
 For gret skil is he proue þat he wroughte  
 But he ne temptith no man þat he boughte 1153  
 As saith seint Iame if he his pistil rede  
 he prouith folk al day it is no drede 1155

And suffrith vs as for our exercise 1156  
 wiþ scharpe scourges of aduersite  
 Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise  
 Nought for to knowe oure wille for certes he  
 Er we were born. knew al our frelte 1160  
 And for oure best is al his gouernaunce  
 Leet vs þanne lyue in vertuous suffraunce 1162

But oo word lordes herkneth er I go 1163  
 It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes [leaf 132]  
 As Grisildes in al a toun þre or tuo  
 For if þat þay were put to such assayes  
 The gold of hem hap now so badde alayes 1167  
 with bras þat þough þe coyn be fair at ye  
 hit wolde raper brest in tuo þan plye 1169

For which heer for þe wyues loue of bathe 1170  
 whos lyf and alle of hir secte god meyntene  
 In high maistry and elles were it scathe  
 I wil with lusty herte freisch and grene  
 Say 3ow a song to glade. 3ow I wene 1174  
 And lat vs stynt of earnestful matiere  
 herknith my song. þat saith in þis manere / 1176

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Lenvoye. de Chaucer.

G Risild is deed and eek hir pacience 1177  
 And bothe at oones buried in Itayle  
 For whiche I crye in open audience / 1179  
 No weddid man so hardy be to assayle  
 his wyues pacience in hope to fynde  
 Grisildes for in certeyn he schal fayl 1182

O noble wyues ful of heigh prudence /	1183
let noon humilite 3our tonges nayle	
Ne lat no clerk haue cause or diligence	1185
To write of 3ow a story of such meruayle /	
As of Grisildes pacience and kynde	
Lest Chichiuache 3ow swolwe in hir entraile	1188
Folwith Ecco þat holdith no silence	1189
But euer answereth at þe countretayle	
Beþ nou3t bydaffed for 3our Innocence	1191
But sharply tak on 3ow þe gouernayle	
Empryntith wel þis lessoun in 3our mynde	
For comun profyt sith it may auayle	1194
3e archewyues stondith at defens	1195
Syn 3e ben strong as is a greet/ Chamayle	
Ne suffre not þat men 3ow don offens	1197
And sclendre wydewes felle as in batayle	
Beth egre as is a Tyger 3ond in Inde	
Ay clappith as a mylle I 3ow counsaile	1200
Ne drede hem not. do hem no reuerence [leaf 132, back]	1201
For þough þin housbond armed be in mayle	
The arwes of þy crabbid eloquence	1203
Schal perse his brest and eek his aduentayle /	
In gelousy I rede eek þou him bynde	
And þou schalt make him couche as doth a quayle	1206
If þou be fair þer folk ben in presence	1207
Schew þou þy visage and þin apparaile	
If þou be foul be fre of þy despense	1209
To gete þe frendes do ay þy trauayle /	
Be ay of chier as light as lef on lynde /	
And let hem care and wepe and wryng and wayle	1212
Explicit.	

¶ here bygynneth þe prolōge of þe marchaundis tale.

**W**Epyng<sup>t</sup> and wailyng<sup>t</sup> care and oþer sorwe  
 I knowe ynough boþe on euen & on morwe  
 Quod þe marchaund. and so doon oþer mo  
 That weddid ben I trowe þat<sup>t</sup> it be so 1216  
 For wel I woot<sup>t</sup> it<sup>t</sup> fareth so with me  
 I haue a wyf<sup>t</sup>. þe worste þat<sup>t</sup> may be  
 For þough þe feend to hir y-coupled were  
 Sche wold him ouer macche I dar wel swere 1220  
 what<sup>t</sup> schuld I 3ow reherse in special  
 hir high malice. sche is a schrewe at<sup>t</sup> al  
 Ther is a long<sup>t</sup> and a large difference  
 Betwix Grisildes grete pacience 1224  
 And of<sup>t</sup> my wyf<sup>t</sup> þe passyng<sup>t</sup> cruelte  
 were I vnbounden also mot I the  
 I wolde neuer eft<sup>t</sup> come in þe snare  
 we weddid men lyue in sorwe and care 1228  
 Assay who-so wil and he schal fynde /  
 That<sup>t</sup> I say soth by seint Thomas of<sup>t</sup> Inde  
 As for þe more part<sup>t</sup>. I say not alle  
 God schilde þat<sup>t</sup> it scholde so byfalle / 1232  
 A good sir host<sup>t</sup>. I haue y-weddid be  
 Thise monthes tuo and more not par de  
 And 3it<sup>t</sup> I trowe he þat<sup>t</sup> al his lyue  
 wyfles hap ben þough þat men wold him riue 1236  
 vnto þe hert<sup>t</sup> ne coupe in no manere /  
 Tellen so moche sorwe as I now heere [leaf 133]  
 Coupe telle of<sup>t</sup> my wyfes cursednesse /  
 No quod our ost<sup>t</sup>: marchaunt<sup>t</sup> so god 3ow blesse 1240  
 Sin 3e so moche knowen of<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> art  
 Ful hertily tellith vs a part<sup>t</sup>  
 Gladly quod he of<sup>t</sup> myn oughne sore  
 For sory hert<sup>t</sup> I telle may na more 1244

[No gap in the MS.]

## ¶ Narrat'

hilom þer was duellyng' in lombardy  
 A worþy knight' þat' born was of paup  
 In which he lyued in gret' prosperite  
 And fourty ȝer. a wifes man was he 1248  
 And folwed ay his bodily delyt'  
 On women. ther was his appetyt'  
 As doon þese fooles þat/ ben seculere  
 And whan þat' he was passed fourty ȝere 1252  
 were it' for holyness or for dotage  
 I can not' say. but' such a gret' corrage  
 hadde þis knight'. to ben a weddid man  
 That' day and night. he doþ al þat' he can 1256  
 Taspys wher þat' he mighte weddid be  
 Praying' our lord to graunte him þat' he  
 Might' oones knowen of þat' blisful lif'  
 þat' is bitwix an housbond and his wyf' 1260  
 And for to lyue vnder þat' holy bond  
 with which god first'. man to womman bond  
 Noon oþer lif' said he is worth a bene  
 For wedlok' is so holy and so clene 1264  
 That' in þis world it is a paradis  
 Thus sayd þis olde knight' þat' was so wys  
 And certainly as soth as god is king'  
 To take a wyf'. is a glorious þing/ 1268  
 And namely whan a man is old and hoor  
 Than is a wyf' þe fruyt' of his tresor  
 Than schuld he take a ȝong' wif' and a fair  
 On which he might' engendre him an heir 1272

And lede his lyf in mirthe and in solace  
 wher as þese bachileres synge alas  
 whan þay fynde eny aduersite  
 In loue which is but childe's vanite [leaf 133, back] 1276  
 And trewely it sit wel to be so  
 That bachilers haue ofte peyne and wo  
 On brutil ground þay bulde brutelnesse /  
 þay fynde whan þay wene sikernes 1280  
 Thay lyue but as a brid oper as a best  
 In liberte and vnder noon arrest  
 Ther as a weddid man in his estate  
 lyuith his lif busily and ordinate 1284  
 vnder þe ȝok of mariage I-bounde  
 wel may his herte in ioie and blisse abounde /  
 For who can be so buxom as a wyf /  
 who is so trewe and eek so ententyf 1288  
 To kepe him seek and hool as is his make  
 For wele or woo sche wol him not forsake /  
 Sche is not wery him to loue and serue  
 Theigh þat he lay bedred. til þat he sterue 1292  
 And ȝet som clerkes seyn it is not so  
 Of whiche theofrast/ is oon of þo  
 what fors pough theofrast. liste lye  
 Ne take no wif quod he for housbondrye 1296  
 As for to spare in houshold þy dispense  
 A trewe seruaunt doth more diligence  
 þy good to kepe þan þin oughne wif /  
 For sche wol clayme half part in al hir lif 1300  
 And if þat þou be seek so god me saue  
 þyne verray frendes or a trewe kuaue  
 wol kepe þe bet þan sche þat waytith ay  
 After þy good and hath doon many day 1304  
 And if þat þou take a wif be war  
 Of oon peril. which declare I ne dar.  
 This entent and an hundrid siþe wors  
 writith þis Mas ther god his bones curs 1308

But take no keep of al such vanite  
 Deffy theofrast and herkne me  
 A wyf is goddes ȝifte verrayly  
 Al oper maner ȝiftes hardily 1312  
 As landes rentes pasture or comune  
 Or oper moeblis ben ȝiftes of fortune [leaf 134]  
 That passen as a schadow on a wal  
 But dred not/ if I playnly telle schal 1316  
 A wyf wil last and in þin hous endure  
 wel lenger þan þe lust/ par aduenture  
 Mariage is a ful gret sacrament  
 he which haþ no wif I hold him schent 1320  
 he lyueth helples. and is al desolate  
 I speke of folk/ in seculer estate  
 And herken why I say not þis for nought  
 The womman is for mannes help I-wrought 1324  
 The heighe god whan he had adam maked  
 And saugh him aloone body naked  
 God of his grete goodnes sayde þanne  
 Let vs now make an helpe to þis manne 1328  
 lyk to himself/. and þan he made Eue  
 her may ȝe see. and here may ȝe preue  
 That wyf is mannes help and his comfort  
 his paradis terrestre and his desport 1332  
 So buxom and so vertuous is sche /  
 Thay mosten neede lyue in vnite.  
 O fleisch þay ben. and on blood as I gesse  
 haue but oon hert. in wele and in distresse / 1336  
 ∴ A wyf! a seinte mary. benedicite  
 how might a man haue eny aduersite  
 That haþ a wyf. certes I can not say  
 The ioie þat is betwixen hem tway 1340  
 Ther may no tonge telle ne herte þink  
 If he be pore sche helpith him to swynk  
 Sche kepith his good and wastith neuer a del  
 And al þat her housbond list. sche likith it wel 1344



Sche saith nought oones nay whan he saith 3e  
 Do þis saith he. al redy sir saith sche  
 O blisful ordre o wedlok' precious  
 Thou art' so mery and ek' so vertuuous 1348  
 And so comendid and approued eek'  
 That' euery man þat' holt' him worth a leek'  
 vpon his bare knees ought' al his lyf'  
 Thanken his god þat' him hap sent a wif' [*leaf 134, back*] 1352  
 Or pray to god oon him for to sende  
 To be with him vnto his lyues ende /  
 For þan his lyf' is set' in sikernesse /  
 he may not' be deceyued as I gesse / 1356  
 So þat' he worche after his wyfes red  
 þan may be boldely bere vp his heed  
 Thay ben so trewe and also so wyse  
 For whiche if' þou wolt do as þe wyse 1360  
 Do alway so þe womman wol þe rede  
 lo how þat' Iacob as þe clerkes rede  
 By good counseil of' his moder Rebecke  
 Band þe kydes skyn about' his sones nekke 1364  
 For which his fader benesoun he wan  
 Lo Iudith as þe story telle can  
 By wys counseil sche goddes poepel kept'  
 And slough him oliphernus whil he slept' 1368  
 Lo abygaille by good counseil how sche /  
 Sauyd hir housbond Nacab whan þat' he /  
 Schold han ben slayn And loke after also  
 By good counseil deliuered out' of' wo' 1372  
 þe poeple of' god. and made him mandoche  
 Of' Assure enhaunsed for to be  
 Ther nys no þing / in gre superlatif'  
 As saith Senec' aboue an humble wyf 1376  
 Suffre þy wyues tonge as Catoun byt'  
 She schal comaunde and þou schalt' suffre it  
 And 3it sche wil obeye of' curtesye  
 A wif' is keper of' þin housbondrye 1380

wel may þe sike man wayle and wepe  
 Ther as þer is no wyf þe hous to kepe  
 I warne þe if wisly þou wilt wirche  
 loue wel þy wyf as crist doth his chirche 1384  
 If þou louest þiself þou louest þy wyf /  
 No man hatith his fleissch but in his lif /  
 he fostrith it and þerfore warne I þe  
 Cherissh þy wif. or þou schalt neuer the 1388  
 housbond & wif what men iape or pleye  
 Of worldly folk holden þe righte weye [leaf 135]  
 Thay ben so knyht þer may noon harm bytyde  
 And nameliche vpon þe wyues syde 1392  
 For which þis Ianuary of which I tolde  
 Considered hath Inwith his dayes olde /  
 The lusty lif the vertuouse quiete  
 That is in mariage hony-swete 1396  
 ¶ And for his frendes on a day he sent  
 To tellen hem the effect of his entent  
 wip face sad. he hap hem this tale told  
 he sayde frendes I am hoor and old 1400  
 And almost god woot at my pittes brinke  
 vpon my soule som what most I þynke  
 I haue my body folily dispendid  
 Blessed be god that I schal be amendid 1404  
 For I wil be certeyn a weddid man  
 And þat anon in al þe hast I can  
 vnto som mayde fair and tender of age /  
 I pray 3ow helpith for my mariage 1408  
 Al sodeynly. for I wil not abyde  
 I wil fonde tespien on my syde  
 To whom I may be weddid hastily  
 But for als moche as 3e ben mo than I. 1412  
 3e schul rather such a þing asprien  
 þan I and wher me lust best to allien  
 But oo þing warne I 3ow my frendes deere /  
 I wil noon old wyf haue in no manere / 1416

Sche schal not<sup>t</sup> passe · sixtene 3er certayn  
 Old fleisch and 3ong<sup>t</sup> fleisch þat<sup>t</sup> wold I haue ful fayn  
 Bet<sup>t</sup> is quod he a pyk<sup>t</sup> þan a pikereþ  
 And bet<sup>t</sup> þan olde boef<sup>t</sup> is tendre vel 1420  
 I wil no womman twenty 3er of<sup>t</sup> age  
 It nys but<sup>t</sup> bene straw and gret<sup>t</sup> forage  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> þese olde wydewes god it woot<sup>t</sup>  
 Thay can so moche craft<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> wades boot 1424  
 So moche broken harm whan þat hem list<sup>t</sup>  
 That<sup>t</sup> wip hem schuld I neuer lyuen in rest<sup>t</sup>  
 For sondry scolis maken subtil clerkes  
 womman of<sup>t</sup> many a skile half<sup>t</sup> a clerk<sup>t</sup> is [leaf 135, back] 1428  
 But<sup>t</sup> certeyn a 3ong<sup>t</sup> þing<sup>t</sup> may men gye  
 Right<sup>t</sup> as men may warm wax with hondes plye  
 wher for I say 3ow plenerly in a clause  
 I wil noon old wyf<sup>t</sup> han right<sup>t</sup> for þat<sup>t</sup> cause 1432  
 For if<sup>t</sup> so were I hadde so meschaunce  
 þat<sup>t</sup> I in hir coupe haue no plesaunce  
 Than schuld I lede my lyf<sup>t</sup> in aduoutrie  
 And go streight<sup>t</sup> to þe deuel whan I dye. 1436  
 Ne children schuld I noon vpon hir geten  
 3et<sup>t</sup> were me leuer houndes had me eten  
 þan þat<sup>t</sup> myn heritage schulde falle  
 In straunge hond and þus I telle 3ow alle 1440  
 I doute not. I wot<sup>t</sup> þe cause why  
 Men scholde wedde. and forþermor woot I  
 Ther spekith many man of<sup>t</sup> mariage  
 That<sup>t</sup> wot<sup>t</sup> nomore of it þan wot<sup>t</sup> my page 1444  
 For whiche causes. man schuld take a wyf<sup>t</sup>  
 If<sup>t</sup> he ne may not<sup>t</sup> chast<sup>t</sup> be by his lif<sup>t</sup>  
 Take him a wif<sup>t</sup> with gret<sup>t</sup> deuocioun  
 By cause of lawful procreacioun 1448  
 Of<sup>t</sup> children to þonour of<sup>t</sup> god aboue  
 And not<sup>t</sup> oonly for paramour and for loue.  
 And for þay schulde leccherye eschiewe  
 And 3eld oure dettes whan þat it is due 1452

Or for þat ilk' man schulde helpen oþer  
 In meschief' as suster schal to þe broþer  
 And lyue in chastite ful heuenly  
 But' sires by 3our leue þat am not I 1456  
 For by þanked I dar make auaunt  
 I fele my lemys stark' and suffisaunt  
 To doon al þat' a man bilongeth vnto  
 I wot' my selue best' what' I may do 1460  
 ¶ Though I be hoor I fare as dop a tree *Nota*  
 That' blossemith er þat' þe fruyt' I-waxe be  
 A blossemy tre is neither drye ne deed  
 I fele me no-wher hoor but' on myn heed 1464  
 Myn herte and my lymes ben as greene.  
 As laurer þurgh þe 3eer is for to seene *af 136]*  
 And synnes 3e han herd al myn entent  
 I pray 3ow to my wille 3e assent' 1468  
 Diuerse men diuersly him tolde  
 Of mariage many ensamples olde  
 Some blamed him some praised it' certayn  
 But' atte laste schortly for to sayn 1472  
 As alday fallith altercacioun  
 Bitwixe frendes in despitesoun  
 Ther fel a strif' bitwen his bretheren tuo *Nota*  
 Of which þat' oon was clepid Placebo 1476  
 Iustinus soply cleped was þat oþer  
 Placebo sayde .o. Ianuary broþer  
 Ful litel need had 3e my lord so deere  
 Counseil to axe of' eny þat' is heere 1480  
 But' þat' 3e ben so ful of' sapience  
 That' 3ow ne likith for 3our heigh prudence /  
 To wayue fro þe word of' Salamon  
 This word said he vnto vs euerychoon 1484  
 werk/ al þing' by counsail þus sayd he /  
 And þanne schaltow nought' repente þe  
 But' þough þat' Salamon speke such a word  
 Myn owne deere broþer and my lord 1488

So wisly god bring<sup>t</sup> my soule at<sup>t</sup> ese and rest  
 I holde ȝour oughne counseil is þe best/  
 For broþer myn of<sup>t</sup> me tak<sup>t</sup> þis motif<sup>t</sup>  
 I haue now ben a court<sup>t</sup> man al my lyf<sup>t</sup> 1492  
 And god wot<sup>t</sup> þough<sup>n</sup>. þat<sup>t</sup> I vnworþy be  
 I haue standen in ful gret degre  
 Abouten lordes in ful gret<sup>t</sup> estat  
 Ȝit<sup>t</sup> had I neuer with noon of<sup>t</sup> hem debaat 1496  
 I neuer hem contraried trewely  
 I wot<sup>t</sup> wel þat<sup>t</sup> my lord can more þan I  
 what<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he saith I hold it ferm and stable  
 I say þe same or elles þing<sup>t</sup> semblable 1500  
 A ful gret<sup>t</sup> fool is eny counselour nota  
 þat<sup>t</sup> seruith any lord of<sup>t</sup> high honour  
 þat<sup>t</sup> dar presume or oones þenken it /  
 That<sup>t</sup> his counseil schuld passe his lordes wit<sup>t</sup> [v 136, bk] 1504  
 Nay lordes ben no fookes by my fay  
 Ȝe haue ȝour self<sup>t</sup> y-spoken heer to day  
 So heigh sentens so holly and so wel  
 þat<sup>t</sup> I consente and conferme euery del 1508  
 Ȝour wordes alle. and ȝoure oppinioun  
 By god þer is no man in al þis toun  
 Ne in ytaile coupe better haue sayd  
 Crist<sup>t</sup> holdith him of<sup>t</sup> þis ful wel a-payd 1512  
 And trewely it<sup>t</sup> is an heigh corrage  
 Of<sup>t</sup> any man þat<sup>t</sup> stopen is in age /  
 To take a ȝong<sup>t</sup> wyf<sup>t</sup> by my fader kyn  
 Ȝour herte hongith on a ioly pyn 1516  
 Doth now in þis matier right<sup>t</sup> as ȝow lest<sup>t</sup>  
 For fynally I hold it<sup>t</sup> for þe best<sup>t</sup>  
 Iustinus þat<sup>t</sup> ay stille sat<sup>t</sup> and herde /  
 Right<sup>t</sup> in þis wise he to placebo answerde / 1520  
 Now brother myn be pacient<sup>t</sup> I ȝow pray  
 Syns Ȝe haue sayd. and herknith what<sup>t</sup> I say  
 Senec<sup>t</sup> amonges oþer wordes wyse  
 Saith þat<sup>t</sup> a man aught<sup>t</sup> him wel auyse 1524

To whom he ȝiueþ his lond or his catel  
 And syns I aught' auyse me right' wel  
 To whom I ȝiue my good away fro me  
 wel more I aught' avised for to be 1528  
 To whom I ȝiue my body for alwey  
 I warn ȝow wel. it' is no childe's pley  
 To take a wyf' wiþoute avisement'  
 Men most' enquire þis is myn assent 1532  
 wher sche be wys or sobre or dronkelewe  
 Or proud or oper way a schrewe  
 A chyder or a wastour of þy good  
 Or riche or pore or elles man is wood 1536  
 Al be it so þat no man fynde schal.  
 Noon in þis world þat' trottith hool in al  
 Neyther man ne best' such as man can deuyse  
 But' natheles it aught' ynough suffise 1540  
 wiþ any wyf' if' so were þat' sche hadde  
 Mo goode thewes þan hir vices badde [leaf 137]  
 And al þis askith leyser to enquire  
 For god woot' I. haue weped many a tere 1544  
 Ful priuely syns I haue had a wyf'  
 Prayse who so wil a weddid mannes lif'  
 Certes I fynd in it but' cost' and care  
 And obseruaunce of' alle blisses bare 1548  
 And ȝit god woot' myn neigheours aboute  
 And namely of' wommen many a route  
 Sayn þat' I haue þe moste stedefast wyf' /  
 And eek' þe meekest' oon þat' berith lyf' 1552  
 But' I woot' best' wher wryngith me my scho note  
 ȝe may for me right' as ȝow liste do  
 Auysith ȝow ȝe ben a man of' age  
 how þat' ȝe entren in to mariage 1556  
 And namly with a ȝong' wif' and a fair  
 By him þat' made water eorþe and air  
 The ȝongest' man þat' is in al þis route  
 Is busy ynough to bring' it wel aboute 1560

## GROUP E. § 4. MERCHANT'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 311

To haue his wif<sup>t</sup> alloone trustith me  
 3e schul not<sup>t</sup> please hir fully 3eres þre  
 This is to say to doon hir ful plesaunce  
 A wyf<sup>t</sup> axith ful many an obseruaunce 1564  
 I pray 3ow þat<sup>t</sup> 3e be not<sup>t</sup> euel apayd  
 wel quod þis Ianuary and hastow sayd  
 Straw for þy senec<sup>t</sup> and for þy prouerbis  
 I coueyte nough<sup>t</sup> a panyer ful of herbes 1568  
 Of scole termes wiser men þan þow /  
 As I haue sayd assenten her right<sup>t</sup> now  
 Vnto my purpose . placebo what<sup>t</sup> say 3e  
 I say it is a cursed man quod he / 1572  
 That<sup>t</sup> lettith matrimoigne sicurly  
 And with þat word þay rysen vp sodeinly  
 And ben assented fully þat<sup>t</sup> he scholde  
 Be weddid whan him lust<sup>t</sup> . and wher he wolde 1576  
 The fantasy . and þe curious busynesse  
 Fro day to day . gan in þe soule impresse  
 Of Ianuary aboute his mariage  
 Many a fair schap and many a fair visage [*leaf 137, back*] 1580  
 Ther passith þorugh his herte night<sup>t</sup> by night  
 As who so took<sup>t</sup> a mirroure polissched bright<sup>t</sup>  
 And set<sup>t</sup> it in a comun market place  
 Than schuld he se . many a figure pace 1584  
 By his mirroure and in þe same wise  
 Gan Ianuary in his þought<sup>t</sup> deuyse  
 Of maydens which þat<sup>t</sup> duellid him bisyde  
 he wist<sup>t</sup> not<sup>t</sup> where þat<sup>t</sup> he might<sup>t</sup> abyde 1588  
 For þough þat<sup>t</sup> oon haue a beaute in hir face  
 Anoper stant<sup>t</sup> so in þe poeples grace  
 For hir sadnesse and hir benignite  
 That<sup>t</sup> of þe poeple grettest<sup>t</sup> vois had sche 1592  
 And som were riche and hadde badde name  
 But<sup>t</sup> napeles bitwix earnest<sup>t</sup> and game  
 he atte last/ appoynted him anoon  
 And let<sup>t</sup> al oper fro his herte goon 1596

And ches hir of his oughne auctorite  
 For loue is blynd al day and may not se/.  
 And whan he was in to bedde brought  
 He purtrayed in his hert<sup>t</sup> and in his þought 1600  
 Hir freische beaute and hir age tendre  
 Hir myddel smal hir armes long<sup>t</sup> and sclendre  
 Hir wise gouernaunce hir gentillesse /  
 Hir wommanly beryng<sup>t</sup> and hir sadnesse 1604  
 And whan þat he on hir was condescendid  
 him þought his chois mighte nought<sup>t</sup> ben amendid  
 For whan þat<sup>t</sup> he himself<sup>t</sup> concludid hadde  
 Him þough ech oper mannes wyf<sup>t</sup> so badde 1608  
 That<sup>t</sup> impossible it were to repplie  
 Agayn his choys þis was his fantasie  
 his frendes sent he to at<sup>t</sup> his instaunce  
 And prayed hem to doon him þat plesaunce 1612  
 That<sup>t</sup> hastily þay wolde to him come  
 he wold abrigge her labour alle and some  
 Nedith no more for him to gon ne ryde  
 he was appoynted þer he wold abyde / 1616  
 Placebo cam and eek<sup>t</sup> his frendes soone /  
 And althirfirst<sup>t</sup>. he bad hem alle a boone [leaf 133]  
 That<sup>t</sup> noon of<sup>t</sup> hem noon argumentis make /  
 Agayn þe purpos. which þat<sup>t</sup> he had take 1620  
 which purpos was plesaunt to god sayd he /  
 And verray ground of<sup>t</sup> his prosperite  
 He sayd þer was a mayden in þe toun  
 which þat<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> beaute hadde gret<sup>t</sup> renoun 1624  
 Al were it so sche were of<sup>t</sup> smal degre /  
 Suffisith him hir trouth and hir beaute /  
 which mayde he sayd he wold haue to his wyf<sup>t</sup>  
 To lede in ease and holinesse his lyf<sup>t</sup> 1628  
 And þanked god þat<sup>t</sup> he might<sup>t</sup> haue hir al  
 That<sup>t</sup> no wight<sup>t</sup> his blisse parten schal  
 And preyed hem to laboure in þis neede  
 And schapen þat<sup>t</sup> he faile not<sup>t</sup> to speede 1632



For þan he sayd his spirit' was at' ease  
 Than is quod he no þing' may me displease /  
 Saue oon þing' prikkith in my conscience /  
 The which I wil rehearse in 3our presence 1636  
 I haue herd sayd quod he ful 3ore ago  
 Ther may no man haue parfyt' blisses tuo  
 This is to say in erthe and eek' in heuene  
 For þough he kepe him fro þe synnes seuene / 1640  
 And eek' from ylk' a braunche of þilke tre  
 3it' is þer so parfy felicite  
 And so gret' ease and lust' in mariage  
 That' euer I am agast' now in myn age 1644  
 That' I schal lede now so mery a lyf'  
 So delicat' wipoute wo and stryf'  
 That' I schal haue myn heuen in erthe heere  
 For sith þat' verrey heuen is bought' so deere 1648  
 with tribulacioun and gret penaunce  
 how schuld I þanne þat liue in such plesaunce  
 As alle wedded men doon with her wyues  
 Come to blisse ther crist' eterne on lyue is 1652  
 This is my drede and 3e my breþeren tweye  
 Assoilith me þis questioun I 3ow preye  
 Iustinus which þat' hated his folye  
 Answerd anoon right' in his iaperie [leaf 128, back] 1656  
 And for he wold his longe tale abrigge  
 he wolde noon auctorite alegge  
 But' sayde sir. so ther be noon obstacle  
 Oþer þan þis god of' his high miracle 1660  
 And of' his mercy may so for 3ow wirche  
 That' er 3e haue 3our rightes of' holy chirche  
 3e may repente of' weddid mannes lyf'  
 In which 3e sayn þer is no wo ne stryf' 1664  
 And elles god forbede but he sente  
 A weddid man grace him to repente  
 wel ofte rather þan a sengle man  
 And þerfor sire þe beste reed I can 1668

Dispaire 3ow nought but haue in 3oure memorie  
 Paraduenture she may be 3our purgatorie  
 Sche may be goddes mene and goddes whippe nota  
 Than schal 3our soule vp to heuen skippe 1672  
 Swyfter þan dop an arwe out of a bowe  
 I hope to god her after 3e shuln knowe  
 That þer nys noon so gret felicite  
 In mariage ne neuermor schal be 1676  
 þat 3ou schal lette of 3our sauacioun  
 So þat 3e use as skile is and resoun  
 The lustes of 3our wyf attemperely  
 And þat 3e please hir not to amorously 1680  
 And þat 3e kepe 3ow eek from oper synne  
 My tale is doon. for my witt is þynne  
 Bep not agast her of my broþer deere /  
 But let vs waden out of þis matiere 1684  
 The wif of Bathe if 3e han vnderstonde  
 Of mariage which 3e han now on honde  
 Declared hath ful wel in litel space  
 Fareth now wel god haue 3ow in his grace 1688  
 And with þat word þis Iustinus and his broþer  
 Han tak her leue and ech of hem of oper  
 And whan þay saugh þat i most needis be  
 Thay wroughten so by sleight and wys trete 1692  
 That sche þis mayden which þat/ Mayus hight  
 As hastily as euer sche might [leaf 159]  
 Schal weddid be vnto þis Ianuarie  
 I trow it were to longe 3ow to tarie 1696  
 If I 3ow tolde of euery scrit and bond  
 By which þat sche was feoffed in his lond  
 Or for to herken of hir riche array  
 But finally y-comen is þat day 1700  
 That to þe chirche boþe ben þay went  
 For to receyue þe holy sacrament  
 Forth comth þe preost with stoole about his necke  
 And bad hir be lik Sarra and Rebecke 1704

In wisdom and in trouth of mariage  
 And sayd his orisouns as is vsage /  
 And crouched hem and bad god schuld hem blesse /  
 And made al secur ynowgh with holinesse 1708  
 Thus ben þay weddid wiþ Solempnite  
 And atte fest sittith he and sche  
 with othir worþy folk vpon the deys  
 Al ful of ioy and blis is that paleys 1712  
 And of Instrumentz and of vitaile  
 The moste deinteuous of ytaile  
 Biforn hem stood such Instruments of soun  
 That Orpheus ne of Thebes Amphioun 1716  
 Ne maden neuer such a melodye  
 At euery cours ther cam loud menstralcye  
 That neuer tromped Ioab for to heere  
 Ne he Theodomas 3it half so cleere / 1720  
 And Thebes whan the cite was in doute  
 Bachus þe wyn hem schenchith al aboute  
 And venus laughith vpon euery wight  
 For Ianuary was bycome hir knight / 1724  
 And wolde bothe assayen his corrage /  
 In liberte and eek / in mariage  
 And with hir fuyrbrond in hir hond aboute  
 Daunceth bifore þe bryde and al þe route 1728  
 And certeynly I dar right wel say þis  
 Imeneus þat god of weddyng is  
 Seigh neuer his lif so mery a weddid man  
 holde þy pees thow poete marcian [leaf 130, back] 1732  
 That writest vs. þat ilke weddyng merye  
 Of hir philologie and he mercurie  
 And of þe songes that the muses songe  
 To smal is boþe þy penne and eek þy tonge 1736  
 For to descriue of þis mariage  
 whan tender 3outhe hap weddid stoupyng age  
 Ther is such mirthe. þat it may not be write  
 Assaieth it 3our self þan may 3e wyte 1740

If þat I lye or noon in þis mateere  
 Mayus þat sit with so benigne a cheere /  
 Hir to bihold it / semed fayerye /  
 Queen ester loked neuer with such an ye 1744  
 On assure so meke a look' hap sche  
 I may not 3ow deuyse al hir beaute  
 But thus moche of hir beaute telle I may  
 That sche was lyk' þe bryghte morw of may 1748  
 Fulild of alle beaute and plesaunce  
 This Ianuary is rauyscht' in a traunce  
 At' euary tyme he lokith on hir face  
 But in his hert' he gan hir to manace 1752  
 That he þat night' in armes wold hir streyne  
 Harder þan euer paris did Eleyne  
 But natheles 3it had he gret' pite  
 That pilke night offenden hir most' he / 1756  
 And þought' allas .o. tendre creature  
 Now wolde god 3e mighte wel endure  
 Al my corrage . it' is so scharp and keene  
 I am agast' 3e schul it not' susteene 1760  
 For god forbede þat I dede al my might  
 Now wolde god þat it were woxe night  
 And þat þe night' wold stonden euermo  
 I wold þat al þis poeple were a go 1764  
 And fynally he doth al his labour  
 As he best' mighte sauynge his honour  
 To hast' hem from þe mote in subtil wise  
 The tyme cam' þat resoun was to ryse 1768  
 And after þat men daunce and drynke fast  
 And spices about' þe hous þay cast' [leaf 140]  
 And ful of ioy . and blis is euary man  
 Al but a squier that' hight' Damyan 1772  
 which karf' tofor þe knight' ful many a day  
 he was so rauyssht' on his lady may  
 That for þe verray payne he was nigh wood  
 Almost' he swelt' and swowned as he stood 1776

So sore hap venus hurt' him wip hir brond  
 As þat' sche bar it daunsyng' in hir hond  
 And to his bed he went' him hastily  
 No more of' him as at' þis tyme telle I 1780  
 But' þer I lete him now his wo compleyne  
 Til freisshe may wol rewen on his peyne /  
 O perilous fuyr þat' in þe bed-straw bredith Auctor  
 O famuler fo þat' his seruice bedith 1784  
 O seruaunt' traitour false homly hewe  
 lyk' to þe nedder in bosom vntrewe /  
 God schild vs alle from þour acquaintance /  
 O Ianuary dronken in plesaunce 1788  
 Of' mariage se how þy damyan  
 Thyn oughne squier and þy borne man  
 Entendith for to do þe vilonye /  
 God graunte þe þin homly fo espye 1792  
 For in þis world nys worse pestilence /  
 Than homly foo . alday in þy presence  
 Parfourmed hap þe sonne his ark' diourne  
 No lenger may þe body of' him soiourne 1796  
 On thorisonte . as in latitude  
 Night' with his mantel þat' is derk' and rude  
 Gan ouersprede themesperie aboute  
 For which departed is þe route 1800  
 Fro Ianuary with þank' on euery side /  
 hoom to her hous lustily þay ryde  
 wher as þay doon her þinges as hem leste  
 And whan þay seigh her tyme þay goon to reste / 1804  
 Soone after þat'. þis hasty Ianuarie  
 wold go to bed . he wold no lenger tarie  
 he drinkith ypocras clarre and vernage /  
 Of' spices hote to encre his corrage [leaf 140, back] 1808  
 And many a letuary had he ful fyn  
 Such as þe cursed monk' daun Constantin  
 Hath writen in his book' de coitu  
 To ete hem alle he nas no þing' eschieu 1812

And to his priue frendes þus sayd he  
 For goddes loue as soon as it may be  
 let voyden al þis hous in curteys wise  
 And þay han doon right as he wold deuyse 1816  
 Men drinken and þe trauers drawe anoon  
 The bruyd was brought abedde as stille as stoon  
 And whan þe bed was with þe prest I-blessid  
 Out of þe chambre hap euery wight him dressed 1820  
 And Ianuary hap fast/ in armes take/  
 His freisshe may / his paradys his make  
 He lullith hir he kissith hir ful ofte  
 with pikke bristlis on his berd vnsofte 1824  
 lik to þe skyn of houndfisch scharp as brere  
 For he was schauē al newe in his manere  
 He rubbith hir about hir tendre face  
 And sayde þus allas I mot trespase 1828  
 To ȝow my spouse. and ȝow gretly offende /  
 Er tyme come þat I wol doun descende  
 But napeles considerith þis quod he  
 Ther nys no werkman what so euer he be 1832  
 þat may bope werke wel and hastily  
 This wol be doon at leysir parfitly  
 It is no fors how longe þat we pleye  
 In trewe wedlock coupled be we tweye 1836  
 And blessed be þe ȝok þat we ben Inn  
 For in actes we mow do no synne  
 A man may do no synne with his wif  
 Ne hurt himseluen wip his oughne knyf 1840  
 For we han leue to play vs by þe lawe  
 Thus laborith he til þat þe day gan dawē  
 And þan he takith a sop in fyn clarre  
 And vpright in his bed þan sittith he 1844  
 And after þat he song ful lowd and clere  
 And kissed his wyf and made wantoun cheere [141]  
 he was al coltissch ful of ragerye  
 And ful of iargoun as a flekked pye 1848

The slakke skyn about' his nekke slakeþ  
 whil þat' he song'. so chaunteþ he and craketh  
 But' god wot' what' þat' may þought' in hir hert /  
 whan sche him saugh vp sittynge in his schert' 1852  
 In his night' cappe and with his nekke lene  
 Sche praysith nought' his pleyng' worth a bene  
 Than sayd he þus my reste wol I take  
 Now day is come I may no lenger wake 1856  
 And doun he layd his heed and sleep til prime  
 And afterward whan þat' he saugh his tyme  
 Vp riseth Ianuary but' freissche may  
 Holdith hir chamber vnto þe fourþe day 1860  
 As vsage is of' wyues for þe best'  
 For euery labour som tyme moot' haue rest'  
 Or elles longe may he not' endure  
 This is to say. no lyues creature 1864  
 Be it'. fissch or brid. or best' or man  
 Now wol I speke of' woful damyan  
 That' languyssh for loue as 3e schuln here  
 Therefore I speke to him in þis manere 1868  
 ¶ I say. O sely damyan alas Auctor  
 Answere to my demaunde as in þis caas  
 how schaltow to þy lady freissche may  
 Telle þy woo. sche wol alway say nay 1872  
 Eek' if' þou speke sche wol þy woo bywreye  
 God be þin help I can no better seye  
 This seke damyan in venus fuyr  
 So brennith þat' he deyeth for desir 1876  
 For which he put' his lyf' in aduenture  
 No lenger might' he in þis wo endure  
 But' priuely a penner gan he borwe  
 And in a letter wrot' he al his sorwe 1880  
 In maner of' a compleynt' or of' a lay  
 vnto his faire freissche lady may  
 And in a purs of' silk' heng' on his schert  
 he hap' it' put' and layd it at his hert' [leaf 141, back] 1884

¶ The moone þat' anoon was þilke day  
That' Ianuary had weddid freische may  
In tuo of taure was in to Cancre gliden  
So long' hath mayus in hir chambre abiden 1888  
As custom is vnto þese nobles alle  
A bryde schal not' eten in þe halle  
Til dayes foure. or þre dayes atte lest'  
I-passed ben. þan let' hir go to þe fest' 1892  
The fourthe day complet fro noon to noon  
whan þat' þe heighe masse was I-doon  
In halle sitte. þis Ianuary and may.  
As freissch as is þe bryghte someres day 1896  
And so bifelle þat' þis goode man  
Remembrid him vpon þis Damyan  
And sayde seinte mary how may þis be  
That' Damyan entendith not' to me 1900  
Is he ay seek' or how may þis bityde  
his squiers which þat' stoode þer bisyde.  
Excusid him by cause of his syknesse  
which letted him to doon his busynesse 1904  
Noon oper cause mighte make him tarie  
That' me forthinkith quod þis Ianuarie  
he is a gentil squyer by my troupe  
If' þat' he deyde it' were harm and routhe 1908  
he is as wys discret' and eek' secre  
As any man I wot' of his degre  
And þerto manerly and seruysable  
And for to be a thrifty man right' able 1912  
But' after mete as soon as euer I may  
I wol myself' visit him and eek' may  
To doom him al þe comfort' þat' I can  
And for þat' word him blessed euery man 1916  
That' of his bounte and his gentillesse  
he wolde so comfort' in seekenesse  
his squyer. for it' was a gentil deede  
Dame quod þis Ianuary tak' good heede 1920



At after-mete 3e wip 3our wommen alle /  
 whan 3e han ben in chambre out of þis halle [leaf 142]  
 That alle 3e goo to se þis Damyan  
 Doth him desport. he is a gentil man 1924  
 And tellith him þat I wil him visite  
 Haue I no þing. but rested me a lyte /  
 And spedith 3ow faste for I wol abyde  
 Til þat 3e slepe faste by my syde 1928  
 And with þat word. he gan vnto him calle  
 A squier þat was marchal of his halle  
 And told him certeyn þinges what he wolde  
 This freissche may hath streight hir wey I-holde 1932  
 wip alle hir wommen vnto Damyan  
 Doun by þe beddes syde sat sche þan  
 Comfortyng him as goodly as sche may  
 This damyan whan þat his tyme he say 1936  
 In secre wise his purs and eek his bille /  
 In which þat he. I-writen had his wille  
 Hap put in to hir hond wipouten more  
 Saue þat he siketh wonder deepe and sore 1940  
 And softely to hir right þus sayd he /  
 Mercy and þat 3e not discouer me  
 For I am deed if þat þis þing discovered be  
 þis purs in hir bosom hud had sche 1944  
 And went hir way 3e gete no more of me  
 But vnto Ianuary comen is sche  
 þat on his beddes syde sit ful softe /  
 And takith hir and kissith hir ful ofte / 1948  
 And layd him doun to slepe and þat anoon  
 Sche feyned hir as þat sche moste goon .  
 Ther as 3e woot þat euery wight moot/ neede  
 And whan sche of þis bille hap taken heede / 1952  
 Sche rent i al to cloutes atte laste  
 And in to þe priuy softely it cast/  
 who studieth now but faire freissche may  
 A-doun by olde Ianuary sche lay 1956

That slepith til þat. þe coughe hap him awaked  
 Anoon he prayde stripen hir al naked  
 he wold of hir he sayd haue som plesaunce  
 hir clothis dede him he sayde som grevaunce [U142, 2A] 1960  
 And sche obeieth be hir lief or loth  
 But lest that precious folk be with me wroth  
 how þat he wroughte. I dar not telle  
 Or whepir it semed him paradys or helle 1964  
 But here I lete hem werken in her wise  
 Til euensong rong and þan þay most arise  
 whepir it be by desteny or aduenture  
 were it by influence or by nature 1968  
 Or by constellacioun þat in such estate  
 The heuen stood þat tyme fortunate  
 As for to putte a bulle of venus werkis  
 For alle þing hath tyme as seyn þese clerkis 1972  
 To eny womman for to gete hir loue  
 I can not say but grete god aboue /  
 þat knowith þat noon acte is causeles  
 He deme of al. for I wil holde my pees 1976  
 But soth is þis how þat þis freisshe may  
 hath take such impressioun þat day  
 Of pite of þis sike damyan  
 That from hir herte sche ne dryue can 1980  
 The remembraunce for to doon him ease /  
 Certeyn þought sche. whom þat þis þing displease  
 I rekke not for her I him assure  
 To loue him best of eny creature / 1984  
 Though he no more hadde þan his scherte  
 Lo pite renneth soone in gentil herte  
 heer may 3e see how excellent fraunchise  
 In womman is. whan þay narrow hem auyse 1988  
 Som tyraunt is as þer ben many oon  
 That hap an hert as hard as is a stoon  
 which wold han lete steruen in þe place  
 wel rather þan han graunted him her grace 1992

And hem reioysen in her cruel pride  
 And rekken nouȝt to ben an homicide  
 ¶ This gentil may fulfillid of pite  
 Right of hir hond a letter maked sche / 1996  
 In which sche grauntith him hir verray grace  
 Ther lakkid nought but oonly day and place [leaf 143]  
 wher þat sche might vnto his lust suffise  
 For it schal be right as he wol deuyse 2000  
 And whan sche saugh hir tyme vpon a day  
 To visite þis damyan goþ May  
 And subtilly þis lettre doun sche thruste  
 Vnder his pylow. rede it if him luste 2004  
 Sche takith him by þe hond and hard him twiste  
 So secrely þat no wight of hit wiste  
 And bad him be al hool and forþ sche wente  
 To Ianuary whan þat he for hir sente 2008  
 vp ryseth Damyan þe nexte morwe  
 Al passed was his siknes and his sorwe /  
 He kembith him. he pruneth him and pyketh  
 he doth al þat vnto his lady likith 2012  
 And eek to Ianuary he goth as lowe /  
 As euer did a dogge for þe bowe /  
 He is so plesaunt vnto euery man  
 For craft is al. who so þat do it can 2016  
 That euery wight is fayn to speke him good  
 And fully in his lady grace he stood  
 Thus lete I damyan about his neede  
 And in my tale forth I wol procede 2020  
 Some clerkes holden þat felice  
 Stant in delit and þerfor certeyn he  
 This noble Ianuary with al his might  
 In honest wise as longith to a knight 2024  
 Schop him to lyue ful deliciously  
 his housyng his array as honestly  
 To his degre was maked as a kynges  
 Amonges oþer of his honest þinges 2028

he made a gardyn walled al wip stoon  
 So fair a Gardyn wot I no wher noon  
 For out of doute I verrely suppose  
 That he þat wroot þe romauns of þe Rose 2032  
 Ne coupe of hit þe beaute wel deuyse  
 Ne Pirapus ne might not wel suffise  
 Though he be god of gardyns for to telle /  
 The beaute of þe gardyn and þe welle [leaf 143, back] 2036  
 That stood vnder a laurer alway greene  
 Ful ofte tyme he pluto and his queene  
 Preserpina and al þe fayerie  
 Desporten hem and maken melodye 2040  
 Aboute þat welle and daunced as men tolde  
 This noble knight þis Ianuary þe olde  
 Such deynte hap in it to walk and pleye  
 That he wold no wight suffre bere þe keye 2044  
 Saue he himself for of þe smale wyket  
 he bar alway of siluer a smal cliket  
 wip which whan þat him list he it vnschette  
 And whan he wolde pay his wyf hir dette / 2048  
 In somer sesoun þider wold he go  
 And may his wyf and no wight but þay tuo  
 And þinges which . þat weren not doon in bedde  
 he in þe gardyn parformed hem and spedde 2052  
 And in þis wise many a mery day  
 lyued þis Ianuary and freische may  
 But worldly ioye may not alway endure  
 To Ianuary ne to no creature 2056  
 ¶ O sodeyn hap . O þou fortune vnstable nota bene  
 lyk to þe scorpion so desceyuable  
 þat flaterest with þin heed whan þou wilt styng  
 Thy tayl is dep þurgh þin enuenymynge 2060  
 O . britel ioye . o sweete venym queynte  
 O monster þat so subtilly canst peynte  
 Thyn 3iftes vnder hiew of stedfastnesse  
 That þou desceyuest boþe more and lesse / 2064

why hastow Ianuary þus deceyued  
 That haddist him for þy fulle frend receyued  
 And now þou hast byrefte him boþe his yen  
 For sorw of which desireth he to dyen 2068  
 Allas þis noble Ianuary fre  
 Amyd his lust and his prosperite  
 Is woxe blynd and þat al sodeynly  
 he wepith and he weyleth pitously 2072  
 And þer with al þe fuyr of Ialousye  
 lest þat his wif schuld falle in som folye [leaf 144]  
 So brent his herte. þat he wolde fayn  
 That som man boþe hir and him had slayn 2076  
 For neyþer after his deth nor in his lyf  
 Ne wold he þat sche were loue ne wyf  
 But euer lyue as wydow in clothes blake /  
 Soul as þe turtil þat lost hap hir make 2080  
 But atte last after a moneth or tweye  
 his sorwe gan aswage soþ to seye  
 For whan he wist it may noon oþer be /  
 he paciently took his aduersite 2084  
 Saue out of doute he may not forgoon  
 That he nas Ialous enermore in oon  
 which Ialousie it was so outrageous  
 That neyþer in halle. ne in noon oþer hous 2088  
 Ne in noon oþer place neuer þe mo  
 he nolde suffre hir to ryde or go  
 But if þat he had hond on hir alway  
 For which ful ofte wepeth freische may 2092  
 That loueth Damyan so benignely  
 That sche moot outhen deyen sodeinly  
 Or elles sche moot han him as hir lest  
 She waytith whan hir herte wolde brest 2096  
 vpon þat oþer syde Damyan  
 Bicomē is þe sorwfullestē man  
 That euer was for neyther night ne day  
 Ne might he speke a word wiþ fressche may 2100

As to his purpos of no such matiere  
 But if þat Ianuary most it heere  
 That had an hond vpon hir euermo  
 But napeles by writyng to and fro 2104  
 And priue signes wist he what sche ment/  
 And sche knew eek þe fyn of his entent  
 ¶ O Ianuary what might it þe auaille  
 If þou might see. as fer as schippes saile 2108  
 For as good is. blynd deceyued be /  
 As to be deceyued whan a man may see  
 Lo argus which þat had an hundred eyen  
 For al þat euer he couþe poure or prien [leaf 144, back] 2112  
 3et was he blent as god wot so ben moo  
 That weneth wisly þat it be nought so  
 Passe ouer is an ease I say no more  
 This freissche may þat I spak of so 3ore 2116  
 In warm wax hath emprynted þe cliket  
 That Ianuary bar of þe smale wicket/  
 with which in to his gardyn ofte he went  
 And damyan þat knew al his entent 2120  
 The cliket counterfeted priuely  
 Ther nys no more to say but hastily  
 Som wonder by þis cliket schal betyde  
 which 3e schal heeren if 3e wol abyde 2124  
 ¶ O noble Ouyde wel soth saistow god woot  
 what sleight is it/ þough it be long & hoot  
 That he nyl fynd it out in som manere  
 By Piramus and Thesbe may men leere 2128  
 Though þay were kept ful longe streyt ouer al  
 Thay ben accorded rownyng þurgh a wal  
 Ther no wight couþe han found out swich a sleight  
 But now to purpos er þat dayes eyght 2132  
 were passid. er þe moneth of Iuyl bifille  
 That Ianuary hap caught so gret a wille  
 Thorugh eggyng of his wyf him for to pleye  
 In his gardyn and no wight but we tweye 2136

That in a morwe vnto þis may saith he /  
 Rys vp my wif. my loue . my lady fre /  
 The turtlis vois . is herd my douue swete  
 The wynter is goon . with his raynes wete 2140  
 Come forth now with . þin eyzen columbine  
 how fairer ben þy brestes þan is þe wyne  
 The gardyn is enclosed al aboute  
 Com forth my swete spouse out of doute 2144  
 Thow hast me wounded in myn hert . o . wyf  
 No spot of þe knew I in al my lif /  
 Com forth and let vs / take oure desport /  
 I ches þe for my wyf and my comfort 2148  
 Such olde lewed wordes vsed he /  
 On damyan a signe made sche [leaf 115]  
 That he schuld go . biforn with his cliket  
 This damyan þan hap opened þe wiket 2152  
 And in he stert and þat in such manere /  
 That no wight . it mighte see nor heere  
 And stille he seet vnder a bussch anoon  
 This Ianuary is blynd as is a stoon 2156  
 with Mayus in his hond and no wight mo  
 In to his freische gardyn is ago  
 And clappid to þe wiket sodeinly  
 Now wyf quod he her nys but 3e and I 2160  
 þat art þe creature þat I best loue  
 For by þat lord þat sit in heuen aboue  
 leuer ich had to dyen on a knyf  
 Than þe offende deere trewe wyf 2164  
 For goddes sake þenk how I þe chees  
 Nought for no coueytise douteles  
 But oonly for þe loue I had to þe  
 And þough þat I be old and may not se 2168  
 Beeth trewe to me and I wol telle 3ow why  
 Thre þinges certes schul 3e wynne þer by  
 First loue of crist and to 3our self honour  
 And al myn heritage toun and tour 2172

I ȝiue it ȝow makith chartres as ȝow leste  
 This schal ben doon to morw er sonne reste  
 So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse  
 I pray ȝow first in couenaunt ȝe me kisse 2176  
 And þough þat I be ialous wyt me nought  
 ȝe ben so deep emprinted in my þought  
 þat whan þat I considre ȝour beaute  
 And þer wip al þe vnlikly eelde of me 2180  
 I may nought certes þough I schulde dye  
 Forbere to ben out of ȝour companye  
 For verray loue þis is wipouten doute  
 Now kisse me wyf and let vs Rome aboute 2184  
 This freissche may whan sche his worde herde  
 Benignely to Ianuary answerde /  
 But first and forward sche bigan to wepe  
 I haue quod sche a soule for to kepe [leaf 145, back] 2188  
 As wel as ȝe and also myn honour  
 And of my wifhod þilke tendre flour  
 which þat I haue ensured in ȝour hond  
 whan þat þe prest to ȝow my body bond 2192  
 wherfor I wil answer in þis manere  
 By þe leue of ȝow my lord so deere  
 I pray to god þat neuer dawe þe day  
 That I ne sterue as foule as womman may 2196  
 If euer I do to my kyn þat schame  
 Or elles I empaire so my name  
 That I be fals and if I do þat lak  
 Doth strepe me and put me in a sak 2200  
 And in þe nexte ryuer do me drenche  
 I am a gentil womman and no wenche  
 why speke ȝe thus. but men ben euer vntrewe  
 And wommen han reproef of ȝow euer newe 2204  
 ȝe haue noon oper contenaunce I leue /  
 But speke to vs of vntrust and repreue  
 And with þat word sche saugh wher damyan  
 Sat in þe buissh and coughen sche bigan 2208



And wiþ hir fyngres signes made sche  
 That damyan schuld clymb vpon a tre nota  
 That charged was with fruyt/ and vp he went/  
 For verrayly he knew al hir entent 2212  
 And euery signe þat sche couthe make  
 wel bet þan Ianuary hir oughne make  
 For in a letter sche had told him al  
 Of þis matier how he worche shal 2216  
 And þus I lete him sitte vpon þe pirie  
 And Ianuary and may romynge mirye  
 ¶ Bright was þe day and bliew þe firmament  
 Phebus hap of gold his stremes down I-sent 2220  
 To gladen euery flour with his warmnesse  
 he was þat tyme in gemmes as I gesse  
 But litel fro his declinacioun  
 Of Caker. Ioues exaltacioun 2224  
 And so bifel þat brighte morwen tyde  
 That in þat gardyn in þe ferther syde / [leaf 146]  
 Pluto that is kyng of fayerye  
 And many a lady in his compaignie 2228  
 Folwyng his wif þe queene preserpine  
 Ech after oþer. as right as a lyne  
 whil þat sche gadred floures in þe mede  
 In claudian 3e may þe story rede 2232  
 how in þis grisly carte he hir fette  
 This king of fayry þan adoun him sette /  
 vpon a bench of turues freissh and greene  
 And right anoon þus sayd he to his queene / 2236  
 ¶ My wyf quod he þer may no wight say nay  
 Thexperiens so preueth euery day  
 The tresoun which þat womman doth to man  
 Ten hundrid þousand. tellen I can 2240  
 Notable of 3our vntrouth and brutelnesse  
 O. Salamon wys and richest of richesse /  
 Fulfild of Sapiens. and of worldly glorie /  
 Ful worpy ben þy wordes to memorie 2244

To euery wight<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> wit and resoun can  
 Thus praysith he 3it<sup>t</sup> þe bounte of<sup>t</sup> man  
 Among<sup>t</sup> a þousand men 3it<sup>t</sup> fond I con  
 But of<sup>t</sup> wommen alle fond I noon 2248  
 Thus saith þe king þat<sup>t</sup> knoweth 3our wikkednesse  
 And Iñc<sup>t</sup> filius Sirac / as I gesse /  
 Ne spekith of<sup>t</sup> 3ow but<sup>t</sup> selde reuerence  
 A . wilde fuyr and corrupt<sup>t</sup> pestilence 2252  
 So falle vpon 3our bodies 3it<sup>t</sup> to night<sup>t</sup>  
 Ne se 3e not<sup>t</sup> þis honorable knight<sup>t</sup>  
 By cause alas þat<sup>t</sup> he is blynd and old  
 his owne man schal make him cokewold 2256  
 loo wher he sitt<sup>t</sup>. þe lecchour in þe tre  
 Now wol I graunten of<sup>t</sup> my maieste /  
 Unto þis olde blinde worþy knight<sup>t</sup>  
 þat<sup>t</sup> he schal haue a3ein his ey3en sight<sup>t</sup> 2260  
 whan þat<sup>t</sup> his wyf<sup>t</sup> wol do him vilonye  
 Than schal he knowe al her harlotrye  
 Boþe in reproef<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> her and oþer mo  
 3e schal quod preserpine and wol 3e so [leaf 146, back] 2264  
 Now by my modres sires soule I swere  
 That<sup>t</sup> I schal 3iue hir suffisaunt<sup>t</sup> answer /  
 And alle wommen after for hir sake  
 That<sup>t</sup> þough þay be in any gult<sup>t</sup> I-take 2268  
 with face bold þay schul hemself<sup>t</sup> excuse  
 And bere hem doun þat<sup>t</sup> wolde hem accuse  
 For lak<sup>t</sup> / of<sup>t</sup> answer noon of<sup>t</sup> hem schal dyen  
 Al had a man seyn a þing<sup>t</sup> wiþ boþe his yen 2272  
 3it schul we wymmen visage it hardily  
 And wepe and swere and chide subtilly  
 So þat<sup>t</sup> 3e men schul ben as lewed as gees  
 what<sup>t</sup> rekkith me of<sup>t</sup> 3our auctoritees 2276  
 I wot<sup>t</sup> wel þat<sup>t</sup> þis Iew þis Salamon  
 Fond of<sup>t</sup> vs wommen fooles many oon  
 But<sup>t</sup> þough he ne fond no good womman  
 3et<sup>t</sup> hap þer founde many anoper man 2280

wommen ful trewe . ful good and vertuous  
 witnesse on hem þat' duelle in cristes hous  
 with martirdom þay proued her constaunce  
 The romayn gestes eek' make remembraunce 2284  
 Of many a verray trewe wyf' also .  
 But' sire be nought' wrath al be it so  
 Though þat' he sayd he fond no good womman  
 I pray ȝow tak' þe sentens of' þe man 2288  
 he mente þus þat' in souereign bounte  
 Nis noon but' god þat' sit' in trinite  
 Ey for verrey god þat' nys but oon  
 what' make ȝe so moche of' Salamon 2292  
 what' þough he made a temple goddes hous  
 what' þough he were riche and glorious  
 So made he eek' a temple of' fals godis  
 How might' he do a þing' þat' more forbod is 2296  
 Par de als fair as ȝe his name emplastre  
 he was a lecchour and an ydolastre  
 And in his eelde he verraily god forsook'  
 And if' god ne had as saip' þe book' 2300  
 I-spared him for his fadres sake he scholde  
 Haue left' his regne rapier þan he wolde [leaf 147]  
 I sette right' nought' of' þe vilonye  
 That ȝe of' wommen write a boterflie 2304  
 I am a womman needes most' I speke  
 Or elles swelle til myn herte breke  
 For syn sche sayd þat' we ben iangleresses  
 As euer hool I moote brouke my tresses 2308  
 I schal not' spare for no curtesye /  
 To speke him harm þat' wold vs vilonye  
 Dame quod þis pluto be no lenger wroth  
 I ȝiue it' vp but/ sith I swere myn oth 2312  
 That' I wil graunte him his sight' agein  
 My word schal stonde I warne ȝow certeyn  
 I am a kyng' it' sit' me nought' to lye  
 And I quod sche a queen of' faierie 2316

hir answer schal sche haue I vndertake  
 Let vs no mo wordes her-of make  
 For soth I wol no lenger 3ow contrarie  
 ∴ Now let vs turne agayn to Ianuarye 2320  
 That in þis gardyn with þis faire may  
 Syngeþ ful merier þan þe papiniay  
 3ow loue I best and schal and oþer noon  
 So long about þe aleys is he goon 2324  
 Til he was come agaynes þilke pirie  
 wher as þis damyan sittith ful mirye  
 On heigh among þe freische leeuys greene  
 This freissche may þat is so bright and scheene 2328  
 Gan for to syke and sayd allas my syde  
 Now sir quod sche for ought þat may bityde  
 I most han of þe peres þat I see  
 Or I moot dye so sore longith me 2332  
 To eten of þe smale peris greene  
 Help for hir loue þat is of heuen queene  
 I telle 3ow wel a womman in my plyt  
 May haue to fruyt so gret an appetyt 2336  
 þat sche may deyen. but sche it haue  
 Allas quod he þat I nad heer a knaue  
 That couthe clymbe allas allas quod he  
 For I am blynd. 3e sire no fors quod sche [*leaf 147, back*] 2340  
 But wolde 3e vouche sauf for goddes sake  
 The piry inwith 3our armes for to take  
 For wel I woot þat 3e mys-truste me  
 Than schold I clymbe wel y-nough quod sche 2344  
 So I my foot might set vpon 3our bak  
 Certes quod he þer on schal be no lak  
 Might I 3ow helpe wiþ myn herte blood  
 he stoupith doun and on his bak sche stood 2348  
 And caught hir by a twist and vp sche goth  
 ladys I pray 3ow þat 3e be not wroþ  
 I can not glose I am a rude man  
 And sodeinly anoon þis damyan 2352

## GROUP E. § 4. MERCHANT'S TALE. Harleian 7334 333

Gan pullen vp þe smok' and in he throng  
 And whan þat' pluto /saugh þis grete wrong'  
 To Ianuary he 3af' his sight' agayn  
 [ . . . . . 2356  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]  
 Ne was þer neuer man of' þing' so fayn  
 But' on his wif' his þought' was euermo  
 Vp to þe tree he kest' his eyzen tuo / 2360  
 And seigh þat' damyan his wyf' had dressid  
 In which maner it may not' ben expressid  
 But' if' I wolde speke vncurteisly  
 And vp he 3af' a roryng' and a cry 2364  
 As doth þe moder whan þe child schal dye  
 Out'. help. alas. harrow. he gan to crie  
 O stronge lady stoure what dos þow  
 And sche answerith sire what' eylyth 3ow 2368  
 haue paciens and resoun in 3our mynde  
 I haue 3ow holpen on boþe 3our eyen blynde  
 vp peril of' my soule I schal not' lyen  
 As me was taught' to hele with 3our yen 2372  
 was noþing' bet'. for to make 3ow see  
 Than stroggle wiþ a man vpon a tree  
 God woot I dede it in ful good entent  
 Stroggle quod he' 3e algaþ' in it went 2376  
 God 3iue 3ow boþe on schames deth to dyen  
 He swyued þe. I saugh it wiþ myn yen  
 And elles be I honged by þe hals  
 Than is quod sche medicine fals [leaf 148] 2380  
 For certeynly if' þat' 3e mighten see  
 3e wold not' say tho wordes vnto me  
 3e han som glymsyng' and no parfyt sight'  
 I se quod he as wel as euer I might' 2384  
 Thankid be god wiþ boþe myn yen tuo  
 And by my trouth me þought' he did þe so  
 3e. mase. mase. goode sire quod sche  
 This þank' haue I for I haue maad 3ow see 2388

Allas quod sche þat euer I was so kynde  
 Now dame quod he let al passe out of mynde  
 Com doun my leef and if I haue myssayd  
 God help me so as I am euel appayd 2392  
 But by my fader soule I wende haue seyn  
 how þat þis damyan had by þe leyn  
 And þat þy smok had layn vpon þy brest  
 3e sire quod sche 3e may wene as 3ow lest/ 2396  
 But sire a man þat wakith out of his slep  
 He may not sodeynly wel take keep  
 vpon a þing ne seen it parfytly  
 Til þat he be adawed verrayly 2400  
 Right so a man þat long hap blynd I-be  
 Ne may not sodeynly so wel I-se  
 First whan þe sight is newe comen agayn  
 As he þat hap a day or tuo I-sayn 2404  
 Til þat 3our sight y-stablid be a while  
 þer may ful many a sighte 3ow bigile  
 Beþ war I pray 3ow for by heuen king  
 Ful many man wenith for to se a þing 2408  
 And it is al anoper þan it/ semeth  
 he þat mys conceyueth he mys demeth  
 And wip þat word sche leep doun fro þe tre  
 This Ianuary who is glad but he 2412  
 he kissith hir and clippith hir ful ofte  
 And on hir wombe he strokith hir ful ofte  
 And to his paleys hom he hath hir lad  
 Now goode men I pray 3ow to be glad 2416  
 Thus endith her my tale of Ianuarye  
 God blesse vs and his moder seinte marie / AmeN. [202/148,  
back]

¶ Here endith the marchauntes tale

[*Small break in MS.*]

**E**y goddes mercy sayd our hoste þo  
 Now such a wyf I pray god keep me fro 2420  
 lo whiche sleighes and subtilitees  
 In wommen ben for ay as busy as bees  
 Ben þay vs seely men for to desceyue  
 And from a soth.. euer wol þay weyue 2424  
 By this marchaundes tale it proueth wel  
 But douteles as trewe as eny steel  
 I haue a wyf þough þat sche pore be  
 But of hir tonge a labbyng schrewe is sche 2428  
 And 3it sche hath an heep of vices mo  
 Ther-of no fors let alle such þinges go  
 But wite 3e what in counseil be it seyð  
 Me rewith sore I am vnto hir teyð 2432  
 And if I scholde reken euery vice  
 which þat sche hath I-wis I were to nyce  
 And cause why. it schuld reported be  
 And told to hir of som of þis meyne 2436  
 Of whom it needith not for to declare  
 Syn wommen connen oute such chaffare  
 And eek my witte suffisith nought þerto  
 To tellen al wherfor my tale is do 2440

[*No gap in the MS.*]

## GROUP F. FRAGMENT VII.

## § 1. THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ Sir Squier com forþ . if þat þour wille be

And say vs a tale for certes 3e

Connen þer-on as moche as ony man

¶ Nay sire quod he . but I wil say as I can 4

wip herty wil . for I wil not rebelle

Against þour wille . a tale wil I telle

Haue me excused if þat I speke amys

My wil is good . and þerto my tale is this . 8

¶ Her endith þe prologe

[*No break in the MS.*]



¶ And her bygynneth þe Squyeres tale

**A**T Sarray in þe lond of Tartary [leaf 149]  
 Ther dwelled a kyng' þat' werryed russy  
 Thurgh which þer deyed many a doughty man  
 This nobil kyng' was cleped Cambynskan 12  
 which in his tyme was of so gret' renoun  
 That' þer' nas nowher in no regioun  
 So excellent a lord in alle þing' /  
 Him lakked nought' þat' longed to a kyng 16  
 As of þe secte of which þat' he was born  
 he kept' his lawe. to which he was sworn  
 And þerto he was hardy wys and riche /  
 And pitous and Iust' alway yliche 20  
 Soth of his word benign and honourable  
 Of his corage as eny centre stable  
 3ong' freisch and strong' in armes desirous  
 As eny bachiler of al his hous 24  
 A fair person he was and fortunat'  
 And kepte so wel his real estat  
 That' þer was no wher such a ryal man  
 This noble kyng' þis tartre þis Cambynskan 28  
 hadde tuo sones by Elcheta his wyf'  
 Of which þe eldest/ highte Algaryf'  
 That' oper was I-cleped Samballo  
 A doughter' had þis worthi king' also 32  
 That' 3ongest' was and highte Canace  
 But' for to telle 3ou al hir beaute  
 It lith not' on my tong' ne my connyng'  
 I dar nou3t' vndertake so heigh a þing' 36

Myn englissh eek<sup>t</sup> is insufficient  
 he moste be a Rethor excellent<sup>t</sup>  
 That couþ his colours longyng<sup>t</sup> for þat<sup>t</sup> art<sup>t</sup>  
 If he schold hir discryue in eny part 40  
 I am non such I mot<sup>t</sup> speke as I can  
 And so bifel it<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> þis Cambynskan  
 hap twenty wynter born his dyademe  
 As he was wont fro ȝer to ȝer I deme 44  
 he leet<sup>t</sup> þe fest<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> his natiuite :  
 Don cryen þurgh Sarray his Cite  
 The last<sup>t</sup> Idus of<sup>t</sup> march after þe ȝeer [leaf 119, back]  
 Phebus þe sonne was Ioly and cleer 48  
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun  
 In marcȝ face and in his mansioun  
 In aries þe colerik<sup>t</sup> þe hote signe  
 Ful lusty was the wedir and benigne 52  
 For which þe foules aȝein þe sonne scheene  
 what<sup>t</sup> for þe sesoun & for þe ȝonge greene  
 Ful lowde song<sup>t</sup> in here affecciouns  
 hem semed haue geten hem protecciouns 56  
 Aȝens þe swerd of<sup>t</sup> wynter kene and cold  
 This Cambynskan of<sup>t</sup> which I haue told  
 In royal vesture sittynge on his deys  
 with dyadem ful heigh in his paleys 60  
 And held his fest<sup>t</sup>. solempne and so riche  
 That<sup>t</sup> in þis worlde was þer noon it<sup>t</sup> liche  
 Of<sup>t</sup> which if I schal tellen al þarray  
 Than wold it<sup>t</sup> occupie a someres day 64  
 And eek<sup>t</sup> it<sup>t</sup> neediþ nouȝt<sup>t</sup> for to deuyse  
 At<sup>t</sup> euery cours þe ordre and þe seruyse  
 I wol nat<sup>t</sup> tellen of<sup>t</sup> her straunge sewes  
 Ne of<sup>t</sup> her swannes ne here heroun-sewes 68  
 Ek<sup>t</sup> in þat<sup>t</sup> lond as tellen knightes olde  
 Ther is som mete þat<sup>t</sup> is ful deynte holde  
 That<sup>t</sup> in þis lond men recch of<sup>t</sup> it but smal  
 Ther is no man it may reporten al 72

I wol not tarien ȝou for it is pryme  
 And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme  
 vnto my purpos. I wol haue my recours  
 That so bifelle after þe þridde cours 76  
 whil þat þe kyng sit þus in his nobleye  
 herkyng his mynstrales her þinges pleye  
 Byforn him atte boord deliciously  
 In atte halle dore al sodeynly 80  
 Ther com a knight vpon a steed of bras  
 And in his hond a brod myrour of glas  
 Vpon his thomb he had of gold a ryng  
 And by his side a naked swerd hangyng 84  
 And vp he rideth to þe heyghe bord [leaf 150]  
 In al þe halle ne was þer spoke a word  
 For meruayl of þis knight him to byholde  
 Ful besily þey wayten ȝong and olde 88  
 This straunge knight þat cam þus sodeynly  
 Al armed sauf his heed ful richely  
 Salued the kyng and queen and lordes alle  
 By ordre as þey seten in to halle / 92  
 with so heigh reuerens and obseruaunce  
 As wel in speche as in contynaunce /  
 That Ewen with his olde curtesye  
 They he come aȝein out of fayrye 96  
 Ne couþe him nouȝt amende wiþ no word  
 And after þis biforn þe highe bord  
 he with a manly vois sayd his message  
 After þe forme vsed in his langage 100  
 wiþouten vice of sillabil or letter  
 And for his tale schulde seme þe better  
 Accordant to his wordes was his cheere  
 As techeth art of speche hem þat it leere 104  
 Al be it þat I can nat sowne his style  
 Ne can nat clymben ouer so heigh a style /  
 ȝit say I þis as to comun entent  
 Thus moche amounteth al þat euer he ment 108

If it so be þat I haue it in mynde /  
 ¶ he sayd þe kyng of Arraby and yynde  
 My liege lord on þis solempne day  
 Saluteth 3ou as he best can or may 112  
 he sendeth 3ou in honour of 3our feste  
 By me þat am redy at al his heste  
 This steede of bras þat esily and wel  
 That can in the space of o day naturel 116  
 This is to say in four an twenty houres  
 wher-so 3ou lust / in droughþe or in schoures  
 Beren 3our body in to euery place  
 To which 3our herte wilneþ for to pace 120  
 wipouten wem of 3ou þurgh foul and fair  
 Or if 3ou lust to flee as heiz in þair  
 As dop an egle whan him list to sore [leaf 150, back]  
 This same steede schal bere 3ou euermore / 124  
 wipoute harm til 3e be þer 3ou leste  
 Though þat 3e slepen on his bak or reste  
 And torne azein with wryþing of a pyn  
 he þat it wrought cowþe ful many a gyn 128  
 he wayted many a constellacioun  
 Er he had do þis operacioun  
 And knew ful many a seal and many a bond  
 ¶ This mirour eek þat I haue in myn hond 132  
 haþ such a mighte / þat men may in it see  
 when þer schal falle eny aduersite  
 Vnto 3our regne vnto 3our self also  
 And openly who is 3our frend or fo 136  
 And ouer al þis if eny lady bright  
 hath set hir hert on eny maner wight  
 If he be fals sche schal his tresoun see  
 his newe loue and his subtilite 140  
 So openly þat þer schal noþing hyde  
 wherfor azeins þis lusty somer tyde  
 This mirour and þis ryng þat 3e may see  
 he haþ send to my lady Canacee 144

3our' excellente doughter þat' is heere  
 ¶ The vertu of þis ryng' and 3e wol heere:  
 Is þis / þat' who . so lust' it for to were  
 vpon hir thomb / or in hir purs to bere 148  
 Ther is no foul / þat' fleeth vnder þe heuen  
 That' schal vnderstonden his steuen .  
 And know his menyng' openly and pleyn  
 and answer him in his langage a3eyn 152  
 And euery gras . þat' groweþ vpon roote  
 Sche schal eek' know / to whom it' wol do boote  
 Al be his woundes neuer so deep and wyde  
 ¶ This naked swerd þat' hangeþ by my syde 156  
 Such vertu hath þat' what man þat' it' smyte  
 Thurghout' his armur it wol kerue and byte  
 were it as þikke as a braunched ook'  
 And what' man is I-wounded with þe strook' 160  
 Schal neuer be hool / til þat' 3ou lust' of grace [leaf 151]  
 To strok' him wip þe plat' in þilke place:  
 Ther he is hurt' . þis is as moche to seyn  
 3e moote with þe platte swerd a3ein 164  
 Stroke him in þe wound and it' wol close /  
 This is þe verray soth wipouten glose /  
 It' failleth nought' whil it is in 3our hold  
 And whan þis knight' þus had his tale told 168  
 he rit out' of þe halle and doun he light'  
 his steede which þat' schon as sonne bright'  
 Stant' in þe court' as stille as eny stoon  
 This knight' is to his chambre lad anon . 172  
 he is vnarmed and to mete I-sett'  
 This present; ben ful richely I-fett'  
 This is to sayn, the swerd and the myrrour  
 And born anon vnto þe highe tour 176  
 with certein officers ordeynd þerfore  
 And vnto Canace þe ryng' is bore:  
 Solempnely ther sche syt' atte table  
 But' sikerly wipouten eny fable 180

The hors of bras þat may nat be remewed  
 It stant as it were to the ground I-glewed  
 Ther may no man out of þe place it dryue  
 For noon engyn of wyndyng or polyue . 184  
 And cause why for þey can nouȝt þe craft  
 And þerfor in the place þei haue it laft  
 Til þat þe knight haþ taught hem þe manere  
 To voyden him as ȝe schul after heere 188  
 Greet was þe pres þat swarmed to and fro  
 To gauren on þis hors þat stondeþ so  
 For it so wyd was and so brod and long  
 So wel proporcioned to be strong 192  
 Right as it were a steed of lumbardye  
 Ther-to so horsly and so quyke of ye  
 As it a gentil poyleys courser were  
 For certes fro his tayl vnto his eere 196  
 Nature ne art ne coupe him nouȝt amende  
 In no degre as al þe poeple wende  
 But euermore her moste wonder was [leaf 181, back]  
 How þat it coupe goon and was of bras 200  
 It was of fayry as þe poeple semed  
 Diuerse peple . diuersly þey demed  
 As many hedes as many wittes been  
 They murmured as doþ a swarm of been 204  
 And made skiles after her fantasies  
 Rehersyng of þe olde poetries  
 And seyden it was I-like þe pagase .i. equus pegaseus  
 The hors þat hadde wynges for to fle / 208  
 Or elles it was þe grekiasch hors Synon  
 That broughte troye to destruccioun  
 As men may in þe olde gestes rede /  
 Myn hert quod oon is euermor in drede 212  
 I trow som men of armes ben þerinne  
 That schapen hem þis cite for to wynne  
 It were good / þat such þing were knowe /  
 Anoper rowned to his felaw lowe / 216

And sayde it lyth for it is raper lik'  
 An apparence maad by som magik'  
 As Iogelours pleyen at' þis festes grete  
 Of sondry þoughtes þus þey Iangle and trete 220  
 As lewed peple demeth comunly  
 Of þinges þat ben maad more subtily  
 Than þey can in her lewednes comprehende  
 They deemen gladly to the badder ende 224  
 And som of hem wondred of þe mirrour  
 That' born was vp in to þe maister tour  
 How men might' in hit suche þinges se  
 Anoper answerd and sayd it might' wel be 228  
 Naturelly by composiciouns  
 Of angels and of heigh reflexiouns  
 And sayde þat' in Rome was such oon  
 They speeke of al-ceyt' and Vitilyon 232  
 Of aristotle / þat' writen in her lyues  
 Of queynte myrrours and prospectyues  
 As known þey þat' han her bokes herd  
 And oper folk' haue wondred on þe swerd 236  
 That' wolde passe þorughout' euery þing' [leaf 152]  
 And fel in speche of Thelophus þe kyng'  
 And of achilles for his queynte spere  
 For he coupe with hit' boþe hele and dere 240  
 Right' in such wyse as men may wip þe swerd  
 Of which right' now 3e haue 3our seluen herd  
 They speeken of sondry hardyng' of metal  
 And speken of medicines þer wip al 244  
 And how and whan it schulde harded be /  
 which is vnknowe / algaþ' vnto me /  
 Tho speeken þey of Canacees ryng'  
 And seyden alle / þat' such a wonder þing' 248  
 Of craft' of rynges herd þey neuer noon  
 Sauf' þat' he moyses and kyng' Salamon  
 Had a name of connyng' in such art'  
 Thus seyen þe peple on euery part' 252

But napeles som seiden þat it was /  
 wonder þing to make of ferne glas /  
 And ȝit is glas nouȝt like aisschen of ferne  
 But for þey han I-knowen it so ferne 256  
 Therfor cesseth her ianglyng and her wonder  
 And sore wondred som of cause of þonder  
 On ebbe and flood on gossomer and on myst  
 And on alle þing til þat þe cause is wist 260  
 Thus Ianglen þey and demen and deuyse  
 Til þat þe kyng gan fro his bord arise  
**P**hebus hath lost þe angel merydyonal  
 And ȝit/ ascendyng was a best roial 264  
 The gentil lyoun wip his adryan  
 whan þat þis gentil kyng þis Cambynskan  
 Ros fro his bord þer as he sat ful hye  
 Biforn him goth ful lowde menstralcy 268  
 Til he cam to his chambre of Parementȝ  
 Ther as þer were diuers instrumentȝ  
 That is y-like an heuen for to heere  
 ¶ Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere 272  
 For in þe fissch. her lady sat ful heyȝe  
 And lokep on hem with a frendly eyȝe /  
 This noble kyng is set vpon his trone /  
 This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone [leaf 152, back] 276  
 And in the daunce he gan with Canace /  
 her is þe reuel and þe iolyte  
 That is not able a dul man to deuyse  
 he most haue knowe loue and his seruise / 280  
 And ben a festly man as freisch as may  
 That schulde ȝou deuyse such array  
 who couthe telle ȝou þe forme of daunce  
 So vncouth and such a freisch countinaunce 284  
 Such subtil loking of dissimilynges  
 For drede of Ialous folk apparceyuynges  
 No man but launcelet and he is deed  
 Therefore I passe ouer al þis lustyheed 288



A say no more but in þis Iolynesse /  
 I lete hem til men to soper hem dresse  
 The styward byt þe spices for to hye  
 And eek þe wyn in al þis melodye 292  
 Thes vsschers and þes squyers ben agon  
 The spices and þe wyn is come anon  
 They eet and drank and whan þis had an ende /  
 vnto þe temple as resoun was þey wende / 296  
 The seruise doon þey and soupen al by day  
 what needeth 3ou to rehersen her array  
 Ech man wot wel þat a kynges feste  
 hath plente to þe lest and to the meste 300  
 And deyntees mo þan ben in my knowyng  
 And after souper goþ þis noble kyng  
 To see þis hors of bras wip al his route  
 Of lordes and of ladyes al aboute / 304  
 Swich wondryng was þer on þis hors of bras  
 That seth þis grete siege of troye was /  
 Ther as men wondred on an hors also  
 Ne was þer such a wondryng as was þo 308  
 But fynally þe kyng asked þe knight  
 The vertu of þis courser and þe might  
 And prayd him tellen of his gouernaunce  
 The hors anon gan for to trippe and daunce 312  
 whan þe knight leyd hand vpon his rayne  
 And sayde sir þer is nomore to sayne [leaf 153]  
 But whan 3ou lust to ryde any where /  
 3e moote trille a pyn stant in his ere 316  
 which I schal telle 3ou bitwen vs two  
 3e moste nempne him to what place also  
 Or what countre 3ou luste for to ryde  
 And whan 3e come þer 3ou lust abyde 320  
 Bid him descende and trille anoþer pynne  
 For þer in lith þe fet of al þe gynne /  
 And he wol doun descend and do 3our wille  
 And in þat place he wol abyde stille 324

Though al þe world had þe contrary swore  
 he schal nat' thennes be I-prowe ne bore  
 Or if' 3ou lust' to bid him þennes goon  
 Trille þis pyn and he wol vanyssh anoon 328  
 Out' of þe sight' of' euery maner wight'  
 And come a3ein. be it' by day or night  
 whan þat' 3ou lust' to clepen him a3ayn  
 In such a gyse as I schal 3ow sayn 332  
 Bitwixe 3ou and me and þerfor soone  
 Byd whan 3ou lust' þer nys nomor to doone  
 Enformed when þe kyng' was of' þe knight'  
 And had conceyued in his wit aright' 336  
 The maner of' þe forme and al þis þing'  
 Ful glad and blith þis noble doughty kyng'  
 Repeyryng' to his reuel as biforn  
 The bridel is vnto þe tour I-born 340  
 And kept' among' his Iewels leef' and deere  
 The hors vanyscht' I not' in what manere  
 Out' of her sight' 3e get' nomore of' me  
 But' þus I lete him in his iolite 344  
 This Cambinskan his lordes festeyng'  
 Til wel neigh þe day bigan to spryng'  
 Explicit' prima pars //

[No break in the MS.]

Incipit secunda pars

**T**he norice of' digestioun þe sleep  
 Gan to him wynk' and bad of' him take keep 348  
 That' merthe and labour wol haue his reste  
 with a galpyng' mouth he him keste  
 And sayd þat it' was tyme to lye down [leaf 153, back]  
 For blood was in his dominacioun 352  
 Cherischeþ natures þanne quod he  
 They þankyn him galpyng' by two and þre  
 And euery wight' gan drawe him to his rest'  
 As sleep hem bad þey took' it' for þe best/ 356

here dremes schul not now be told for me  
 Ful were here heedes of fumosite  
 That causeþ drem of which þer is no charge /  
 They slepen til it was prime large / 360  
 The moste part but it were Canace  
 Sche was ful mesurable as wommen be  
 For of hir fader hap sche take hir leue  
 To go to reste soon after it was eue / 364  
 hir luste not appalled for to be  
 Ne on þe morwe vnfestly for to se /  
 And kept hir firste sleep and þan awook  
 For such a Ioye sche in herte took 368  
 Boþe of hir queynte ryng and hir myrrour  
 That twenty tyme chaunged hire colour  
 And in hire sleep right for impressioun  
 Of hir myrrour sche had a visioun 372  
 wher-for er þat þe sonne vp gan glyde /  
 Sche cleped vpon her maistresse beside /  
 And sayde þat hire luste for to ryse  
 These olde wommen þat ben gladly wise 376  
 As is here maystresse answered hir anoon  
 And sayd madame whider wold ȝe goon  
 Thus erly for folk ben alle in reste /  
 I wil quod sche aryse for me leste 380  
 No lenger for to slepe and walke aboute  
 hir maistres clepeth wommen a gret route /  
 And vp þey risen a ten oþer a twelue  
 vp ryseþ fresshe Canace hir selue 384  
 As rody and bright as is þe ȝonge sonne  
 That in þe Ram is ten degrees I-ronne  
 Non heiher was he<sup>1</sup> whan sche redy was [<sup>1</sup> *Arat*, 'sche']  
 And forth sche walked esily a pas 388  
 Arayed after þe lusty sesoun soote [leaf 154]  
 lightly for to play and walke on foote  
 Nought but wiþ fyue or six of hir meyne  
 And a trench fer in þe park goþ sche / 392

The vapour which þat of þe erthe glod  
 Makeþ þe sonne seme rody and sot  
 But napeles it was so fair a sight  
 That it made alle here hertes for to light 396  
 what for þe sesoun what for þe mornyng  
 And for þe foules þat sche herde syng  
 For right anon sche wiste what þey ment  
 Right by here song and knew al here entent / 400  
 ¶ The knotte why þat euery tale is told  
 If that it be taryed til lust be cold  
 Of hem þat han hit after herkned ȝore  
 The sauour passeth euer lenger þe more 404  
 For fulsomnes of þe prolixite  
 And by þis same resoun thinketh me  
 I schulde to þe knotte condescende /  
 And make of hir walkyng sone an ende · 408  
 A-myddes a tree for-drue as whit as chalk  
 As Canace was pley yng in hir walk  
 There sat a faukoun ouer hir heed ful hye  
 þat with a pitous vois bigan to crye 412  
 I-beten hadde sche hir self so pitously  
 That al the woode resowned of hire cry  
 wiþ boþe hir wynges to þe reede blood  
 Ran endelong þe tree þer as sche stood 416  
 And euer in oon sche cried and schryght  
 And wiþ hir bek hir selue so sche pight  
 That þer nys tigre non ne cruel beste  
 That dwelleþ eyþer in wood or in foreste 420  
 That nold han wept if þat he cowde  
 For sorw of hir sche schright alwey so lowde  
 For þer nas neuer ȝit no man on lyue  
 If that he couþe a faukoun discriue 424  
 That herd of such anoper of fairnesse  
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse  
 Of schap of al þat might I-rekened be [leaf 154, back]  
 A faukoun peregryn þan semed sche 428

Of fremde lond and euer as sche stood  
 Sche swowned now and now for lak' of blood  
 Til wel neigh sche falleþ fro þe tre  
 This faire kynges doughter Canace 432  
 That on hir fynger bar þe queynte ryng  
 Thurgh which sche vnderstood wel euery þing  
 That eny foul may in his lydne sayn  
 And couþe answer him in his lydne agayn 436  
 hap vnderstonde what þe faukoun seyde  
 And wel neigh almost for rewthe sche deyde  
 And to þe tree sche goth ful hastily  
 And on þis faukoun lokeþ pitously 440  
 And held hir lappe a-brod for wel sche wist  
 The faukoun moste falle fro þe twist  
 whan þat it swowned next for lak' of blood  
 A long while to wayten hir sche stood 444  
 Til atte last sche spak in þis manere  
 Vnto þe hauk as 3e schul after heere  
 ¶ what is þe cause if it be for to telle  
 That 3e ben in þat furyaht peyne of helle 448  
 Quod Canace vnto þis hauk aboue  
 Is þis for sorwe of deth or elles loue  
 For as I trowe þis ben causes tuo  
 That causen most a gentil herte wo 452  
 Of oper harm it needeþ nouȝt to speke  
 For 3e 3our self vpon 3our self awreke  
 which þat preueþ wel þat either Ire or drede  
 Mote ben enchesoun of 3our cruel dede 456  
 Sith þat I see noon oper wight 3ou chace  
 For loue of god so doþ 3our selue grace  
 Or what ben 3our helpe for west ner Este  
 Ne saugh I neuer er now no bryd ne beste 460  
 That ferde with himself so pitously  
 3e sle me with 3our sorwe so verrily  
 I haue of 3ou so gret compassioun  
 For goddes loue com fro þe tree a doun 464

And as I am a kynges doughter trewe [leaf 155]  
 If þat I verrayly þe cause knewe  
 Of ȝour diseſe if it lay in my might  
 I wold amenden it if þat I might 468  
 Als wiſly help me grete god of kynde  
 And herbes ſchal I right ynowe fynde  
 To helen with ȝour hurtes haſtly  
 Tho ſchright þis faukoun more pitouſly 472  
 Than euer ſche did and fil to ground anoon  
 And lay a-swowne deed as eny ſtoon  
 Til Canace hath in hir lap y-take  
 vnto þat tyme ſche gan of ſwowne ſlake / 476  
 And after þat ſche gan of ſwown abreyde  
 Right in hir haukes lydne thus ſche ſeyde  
 That pite renneth ſone in gentil hert  
 Felyng his ſimilitude in peynes ſmerte 480  
 Is proued alday as men may ſee  
 As wel by werk as by auctorite  
 For gentil herte kepeth gentillesse /  
 I ſee wel þat ȝe haue on my diſtreſſe 484  
 Compaſſioun my faire Canace  
 Of verray wommanly benignite /  
 That nature in ȝour principles hap ſet  
 But noon hope for to fare þe bet 488  
 But for to obeye vnto ȝour herte fre  
 And for to make othere war by me  
 As by þe whelp chaſtiſed is þe lyoun  
 And for þat cauſe and þat concluſioun 492  
 whiles þat I haue a leyſer and a ſpace  
 Myn harm I wil confeſſen er I pace  
 And whil ſche euer of hir ſorwe tolde  
 That oper wept as ſche to water wolde / 496  
 Til þat þe faucoun bad hir to be ſtille /  
 And with a ſighhe / þus ſche ſayd hir tille  
 ¶ Ther I was allas þat ilke day  
 And foſtred in a Roch of marble gray 500

So tendrely that noping eyled me /  
 I wiste not / what was aduersite  
 Til I coupe flee ful heigh vnder þe sky [leaf 155, back]  
 Tho dwelled a tercelet me faste by 504  
 That semed welle of alle gentillesse  
 Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse  
 It was I-wrapped vnder humble cheere  
 And vnder heewe of troupe in such manere 508  
 Vnder plesaunce and vnder besy peyne  
 That no wight wende þat he coupe feyne  
 So deep in greyn he deyed his colours  
 Right as a serpent hut him vnder floures 512  
 Til he may see his tyme for to byte  
 Right so þis god of loue, þis ypocrite  
 Doþ so his sermonys and his obseruaunce/  
 vnder subtil colour and aqueyntaunce 516  
 That sowneth vnto gentillesse of loue  
 As in a thombe is al þe faire aboue  
 And vnder is þe corps whiche þat 3e wot  
 Such as was þis Ipocrite boþe cold and hot 520  
 And in this wise he serued his entent  
 That sauf þe feend noon wiste what he ment  
 Til he so long had weped and compleyned  
 And many a 3eer his seruice to me feyned 524  
 Til þat myn hert to pitous and to nyce  
 Al Innocent of his crouned malice  
 For-fered of his deth as þoughte me  
 vpon his othes and his sewerte 528  
 Graunted him loue vpon þis condicioun  
 That euermo myn honour and my renoun  
 were saued boþe pryuy and apert  
 This is to sayn þat after his desert 532  
 I 3af him al myn hert and al my þought  
 god woot and he þat oper weye nought  
 And took his hert in chaunge of myn for ay  
 But soþ is sayd go siþens many a day 536

A trew wight and a theef þenketh nouȝt oon  
 And when he saugh þe þyng so fer I-goon  
 That I graunted him fully my loue /  
 In such a wyse as I haue sayd aboue- / 540  
 And ȝeuen him my trewe hert as fre [leaf 156]  
 As he swor he ȝaf his herte to me /  
 Anon þis Tigre ful of doublenesse  
 Fil on his knees with so gret deuoutenesse 544  
 wip high reuerence and as by his chere  
 So lyk a gentil louer of manere  
 So rauysched as it semede for loye  
 That neuer Iason ne Parys of Troye 548  
 Iason certes ne noon oþer man  
 Sip lameth was þat alþer first bygan  
 To louen two as writen folk biforn  
 Ne neuer sip þe firste man was born 552  
 Ne coupe man by twenty þousand part  
 Contrefete þe sophemes of his art  
 Ne were worþy to vnbokel his galoche  
 Ther doublenes of feynyng schold approche 556  
 Ne so coupe þankyn a knight as he did me  
 His maner was an heuen for to see  
 To eny womman were sche neuer so wys  
 So peynteth he and kembeth poynt deuys 560  
 As wel his wordes as his continuaunce  
 And I so loued him for his obeisaunce  
 And for þe trouthe I demed in his herte  
 That if so were þat eny þing him smerte 564  
 And were it neuer so litel and I it wist  
 Me þought I felte deth at myn hert twist  
 And schortly so ferforth þis þing went  
 That my wil was his willes instrument 568  
 This is to say my wille obeied his wille  
 In alle þing as fer as resoun fille  
 kepyng þe boundes of my worschip euer  
 Ne neuer had I þing so leef ne leuer 572



As him god woot ne neuer schal nomo  
 This laste lenger þan a 3eer or two  
 That I supposed of him nought but good  
 But fynally atte laste þus it stood 576  
 That fortune wolde þat he moste twynne  
 Out of þe place which þat I was Inne  
 wher me was wo it is no question / [leaf 156, back]  
 I can nat make of it descripcioun 580  
 For o þing dar I telle boldely  
 I know what is þe peyne of deth þerby  
 which harm I felt for he ne mighte byleue  
 So on a day of me he took his leue 584  
 So sorwful eek þat I went verrayly  
 That he had feled als moche as I  
 whan þat I herd him speke and saugh his hewe  
 But napeles I þought he was vntrewe 588  
 And eek þat he schulde repeire a3eyn  
 wipinne a litel while soþ to seyn  
 And resoun wold eek þat he moste go : for his honour  
 Wher-for I wold not ben ayein his honour [spurious] 592  
 Than I made vertu of necessite  
 And took it wel seþens it moste be  
 As I best might I had for him my sorwe  
 And took him by þe hand seint Iohn to borwe 596  
 And sayde þus / lo I am 3our al  
 Beþ such as I haue be to 3ou and schal  
 what he answerd it needeþ nat to reherse  
 who can best say þan he, who can do werse // 600  
 whan he haþ al wel sayd þan haþ he doon  
 Therfor bihoueþ him a ful long spoon  
 That schal ete wip a feend þus herd I say  
 So atte last he moste forþ his way 604  
 And forth he fleeth til he cam þer him leste  
 whan it cam him to purpos for to reste  
 I trow he hadde þilke text in mynde  
 That alle þing reþeyryng to his kynde 608

Gladeþ himself þus sey men as I gesse  
Men louen of kynde newefangilnesse  
As briddes doon þat men in cage feede  
For þeigh þou night and day take of hem heede 612  
And straw her cage faire and soft as silk  
And ȝeue hem sugre hony breed and mylk  
Ȝet right anoon as his dore is vppe  
he with his feet wil sporne down his cuppe 616

And to þe wode

[*Eight leaves are here missing from the MS.*]

[*Brit. Mus. Harl. 7334 begins again, leaf 157.*]

lasse þan a þousand pound he wolde nought haue	1224
Ne gladly for þat somme he wolde not goon	
Aurilius wip blisful hert anoon	
Answerde þus. fy on a þousand pound	
This wyde world which þat men say is round	1228
I wold it ȝiue if I were lord of it/	
This bargeyn is ful dryue for we ben knyht	
ȝe schal be payed trewly by my troupe /	
But lokeþ now for necligence or slouþe	1232
ȝe tarie vs heer no lenger þan to morwe /	
Nay quod þis clerk haue her my faith to borwe	
To bed is goon aurilius whan him leste	
And wel neigh al night he had his reste	1236

what for his labour and his hope of blisse  
 His woful hert of penaunce had a lisse /  
 vpon þe morwe whan þat it was day  
 To breteigne take þei þe righte way 1240  
 Aurilius and þis magicien bisyde  
 And ben descendid þer þay wol abyde  
 And þis was as þese bookes me remembre  
 The colde frosty seison of Decembre 1244  
 Phebus wax old and hewed lyk latoun  
 That in his hote declinacioun  
 Schon as þe burned gold with stremes bright  
 But now in Capricorn a-down he light 1248  
 wher as he schon ful pale I dar wel sayn  
 The bitter frostes with þe sleet and rayn  
 Destroyed hap þe grene in euery 3erd  
 Ianus sit by þe fuyr wip double berd 1252  
 And drynkeþ of his bugle horn þe wyn  
 Biforn him stont þe braun of toskid swyn  
 And Nowel crieþ euery lusty man  
 Aurilius in al þat euer he can 1256  
 Dop to his maister chier and reuerence  
 And peyneþ him to doon his diligence  
 To bringen him out of his peynes smerte  
 Or wip a sword þat he wold slytte his herte 1260  
 This subtil clerk such rouþe had of þis man  
 That night and day he spedep him þat he can [leaf 157, back]  
 To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun  
 This is to say to make Illusioun 1264  
 By such an apparence of iogelrie  
 I can no termes of astrologie  
 That sche and euery wight schold wene and saye  
 That of Breteygñ þe rokkes were a waye 1268  
 Or elles þey sonken were vnder þe grounde  
 So atte last he hap a tyme I-founde  
 To make his iapes and his wrecchednesse /  
 Of such a superstitious cursednesse / 1272

His tables tollitanes forþ he brought  
 Ful wel corrected ne þer lakked nought  
 Neiþer his collect ne his expans yeeres  
 Ne his rootes ne his oþer geeres / 1276  
 As ben his centris & his argumentis  
 And his *proporcionels* conuenientis  
 For her equaciouns in euery þing /  
 And by his þre speeres in his worching 1280  
 he knew ful wel how for alluath was schoue  
 For þe heed of þilk fixe aries aboue  
 That in þe fourþe speere considred is  
 Ful subtilly he calkild al þis 1284  
 whan he had founde his firste mancioun  
 He knew þe remenaunt by *proporcioun*  
 And knew þe arisyng of þis moone wel  
 And in whos face and terme and euery del 1288  
 And knew ful wel þe moones mancioun  
 Acordaunt to his operacioun  
 And knew also his other obseruaunces  
 For suche illusiouns and suche meschaunces 1292  
 As hethen folk vsed in þilke dayes  
 For which no lenger maked he delayes  
 But þurgh his magik for a wike or tweye  
 It semed þat þe rokkes were aweye 1296  
 Aurilius which ȝet dispayred is  
 wher he schal haue his loue or fare amys  
 Awayteþ night and day on þis miracle  
 And whan he knew þat þer was noon obstacle [*leaf 138*] 1300  
 That voyded were þese rokkes euerich oon  
 Doun to his maistres feet he fel anoon  
 And sayd I wrecched woful aurilius  
 Thanke ȝou lord and my lady Venus 1304  
 That me han holpe fro my cares colde /  
 And to þe temple his way forþ he hap holde  
 wher as he knew he schold his lady se  
 And whan he saugh his tyme anoon right he 1308

with dredful hert and with ful humble cheere

Salued hap his owne lady deere

My souerayn lady quod þis woful man

whom I most drede and loue as I can 1312

And lopest were of al þis world displese /

Nere it þat I for 3ou haue such desese /

That I most deye her at 3oure foot anon

Nought wold I telle how me is wo byguon 1316

But certes ouper most I dye or pleyne

3e sleen me gulteles for verrey peyne

But of my dep þough þat 3e haue no roupe

Auyseth 3ow or þat 3e breke 3our troupe 1320

Repentep 3ow for þilke god aboue

3e me sleen by cause þat I 3ou loue

For madame wel 3e woot what/ 3e han hight

Nat þat I challenge eny þing of right 1324

Of 3ow my souerayn lady but 3oure grace

But in a gardyn 3onde at such a place

3e wot right wel what 3e byhighte me

And in myn hond 3our troupe plichte 3e 1328

To loue me best god woot/ 3e sayde so

Al be þat I vnworthy am þerto

Ma dame I speke it for thonour of 3ow

More þan to saue myn hertes lif right now 1332

I haue do so as 3e comaunded me

And if 3e vouche sauf 3e may go se

Dop as 3ou list haue 3oure byheste in mynde

For quykt or deed right þer 3e schul me fynde 1336

In 3ow lip al to do me lyue or deye

But wel I wot þe rokkes ben aweye

[See 133, back]

he takeþ his leue and he astoned stood

In alle hir face nas oon drop of blood 1340

Sche wend neuer haue be in such a trappe

Allas quod sche þat euer þis schulde happe

For wend I neuer by possibilite

That such a monstre or merueyl mighte be / 1344

It is agayns þe proces of nature  
 And hom sche goþ a sorwful creature  
 For verray fere vnneþe may sche go  
 Sche wepeþ wayleþ al a day or tuo 1348  
 And swowneþ þat it rouþe was to see  
 But why it was to no wight tolde sche  
 For out of toune was goon aruegarius  
 But to hir self sche spak/ and sayde þus 1352  
 wiþ face pale and with ful sorwful chiere  
 In hir compleight as 3e schul after hiere  
 ¶ Allas quod sche on þe fortune I ployne  
 That vnwar, wrapped me hast, in þy cheyne 1356  
 Fro which tescape woot I no socour  
 Saue oonly deþ or elles dishonour  
 O n of þese tuo bihoueth me to chese /  
 But napeles 3et haue I leuer leese 1360  
 My lif þan of my body to haue schame  
 Or knowe my-selue fals or lese my name /  
 And with my deþ I may be quyt I-wys  
 Hath þer not many a noble wyf er þis / 1364  
 And many a mayden slayn hir-self allas  
 Raper þan with her body doon trespas /  
 3is certeynly lo stories beren witnes  
 whan þritty tiraunt3 ful of cursednes 1368  
 hadde slayn phidon in athenes atte fest  
 Thay comaunded his doughtres to arest  
 And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit  
 And naked to fulfille her foule delyt 1372  
 In her fadres blood þey made hem daunce  
 vpon þe pauyment god 3eue hem meschaunce  
 For which þese woful maydens ful of drede  
 Raper þan þey wolde lese her maydenhede [1374-1375] 1376  
 They priuely ben stert in to a welle /  
 And drenched hemselfen as þe bookes telle  
 ¶ They of mecene leet enquere and seeke /  
 Of lacidomye fifty maydenes eeke / 1380

On which þay wolden doon her leccherie  
 But was þer noon of al þat companye  
 was slayn and wiþ a good entente  
 Ches raper for to deye þan to assente 1384  
 To ben oppressed of hir maydenhede  
 why schuld I þan to deyen ben in drede  
 ¶ Lo eek þe Tyraunt/ aristoclides  
 That loued a mayden heet Stimpthalides 1388  
 whan þat hir father slayn was on a night  
 vnto dyanes temple goþ sche right  
 And hent þe ymage in hir hondes tuo  
 Fro which ymage wold sche neuer go 1392  
 No wight might of hit/ hir hondes race  
 Til sche was slayn right in þe selue place  
 Now siþ þat maydens hadde such despit  
 To ben defouled with mannes foul delit 1396  
 wel aught a wif rather herself to sle  
 Than be defouled as it thenkep me  
 ¶ what schal I seyn of hasdrubaldes wyf  
 That at Cartage byraft hir-self þe lyf 1400  
 For whan sche saugh þat Romainys wan þe toun  
 Sche took hir children alle and skipte a doun  
 In to þe fuyr and ches raper to deye  
 Than eny romayn dide hir vilonye 1404  
 ¶ Hap nought lucesse slayn herself allas  
 At Rome whanne sche oppressid was  
 Of tarquyn for hir þought it was a schame /  
 To lyuen whan sche hadde lost hir name 1408  
 ¶ The seuen maydens of milifie also  
 han slayn hemself for verray drede and wo  
 Raper þan folk of Gawle hem schulde oppresse  
 Mo þan a thousand stories as I gesse 1412  
 Coupe I now telle as touching þis matiere  
 ¶ whan habradace was slayn his wif so deere [loaf 150, back]  
 hir-seluen slough and leet hir blood to glyde /  
 In habradaces woundes deepe and wyde / 1416



And seyde my body atte leste way  
 Ther schal no wight defoulen if I may  
 what schold I mo ensamples her of sayn . . .  
 Seppen so many han hemseluen slayn . . . 1420  
 wel raper þan þey wolde defouled be /  
 I wol conclude þat it is best for me  
 To slen myself þan be defouled þus  
 I wol be trewe vnto aruegarius 1424  
 Or rather sle myself in som manere  
 As dede Democionis douȝter deere  
 By cause sche wolde nought defouled be /  
 O cedasus it is ful gret pite 1428  
 To reden how þy doughteren dyed allas  
 That slowe herself for suche maner caas  
 As gret a pite was it or wel more  
 The theban mayden þat for nichonore 1432  
 hir-seluen slough right for such maner wo  
 Anoper Theban mayden dede right so  
 For oon of macidone had hir oppressed  
 Sche with hire deȝ maydenhede redressed 1436  
 what schal I sayn of Niceratis wif  
 That for such caas biraft hir self hir lyf  
 how trewe eek was cito alcebiades  
 his loue . þat rather to dyen ches 1440  
 Than for to suffre his body vnburied be  
 Lo which a wif was alceste quod sche  
 what saip omer of good penolope  
 Al grece knoweȝ of hir chastite 1444  
 Par di of laodomya is writen þus  
 That whan out of Troye was Protheselaus  
 No lenger wol sche lyue after his day  
 The same of noble porcia telle I may 1448  
 wipoute brutes kynde sche myȝt not lyue  
 To whom sche had al hool hir herte ȝyue  
 The parfyt wyfhod of artemesye  
 honeured is purgh al þe Barbarie [leaf 100] 1452

O thena queen þy wifly chastite  
 To alle wyues may a mirour be  
 [ . . . no gap in the MS.: these lines are  
 . . . . known only in the Ellesmere MS.] 1456  
 Thus playned Dorigen a day or tweye  
 Purposyng' euer þat' sche wolde deye  
 But' napeles vpon þe thridde night  
 hom cam arueragus þis worþy knight 1460  
 And asked hir why þat' sche wept' so sore /  
 And sche gan wepe euer lenger þe more  
 Allas quod sche þat' euer was I born  
 Thus haue I sayd quod sche þus haue I sworn 1464  
 And told him al as ȝe han herd biforn  
 It' nedep nought' reherse it you no more  
 ¶ This housbond wip glad chiere in good wise  
 Answerd and sayde as I schal ȝou deuyse 1468  
 Is þer aught' elles Dorigen but þis  
 Nay nay quod sche god me so rede & wis  
 This is to moche and it were goddes wille  
 ȝe wyf' quod he let' slepe þat' may be stille 1472  
 It' may be wel peraunter ȝet' to day  
 ȝe schal ȝour troupe holden by my fay  
 For god so wisly haue mercy on me  
 I hadde wel leuer I-stekid for to be 1476  
 For verray loue which I to ȝou haue /  
 But' if' ȝe scholde ȝour troupe kepe and saue  
 Troupe is þe heighest' þing' þat men may kepe  
 But' wip þat word he gan anon to wepe 1480  
 And sayde I ȝow forbede vp peyne of' dep  
 That' neuer whil þe lasteth lyf' or breth  
 To no wight' telle þou of' þis auenture  
 As I may best' I wil my woo endure 1484  
 Ne make no contenaunce of' heuynesse  
 þat' folk' of' ȝou may deme harm or gesse  
 And for he cleped a squyer and a mayde  
 Gop forþ anon wip Dorigen he sayde 1488

And bryngeþ hir to such a place anoon  
Thay take her leue and on her wey þey gon  
But þay ne wiste why sche þider went  
He nolde no wight tellen his entent [leaf 160, back] 1492  
[ . . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . . 1496  
. . . . . no gap in the MS.: these lines are  
. . . . . known only in the Ellesmere MS.]  
This squyer which þat hight aurelius  
On dorigen þat was so ameraus 1500  
Of aduenture happed hire to mete  
Amyd þe toun right in þe quyke strete  
As sche was boun to goon þe wey forþ-right  
Toward þe Gardyn þer as sche had hight 1504  
And he was to þe gardynward also /  
For wel he spyed whan sche wolde go  
Out of hir hous to eny maner place  
But þus þay mette of aduenture or grace 1508  
And he salueth hir with glad entent  
And askith hire whiderward sche went/  
And sche answered half as sche were mad  
vnto þe gardyn as myn housbond bad 1512  
My troupe for to holde allas allas  
Aurilius gan wondren on þis caas  
And in his hert had gret compassioun  
Of hire and of hir lamentacioun 1516  
And of Arueragus þe worþy knight  
That bad hir hold al þat sche hadde hight  
So loþ him was his wif schuld breke hir troupe  
And in his hert he caught of this gret roupe 1520  
Consideryng þe best on euery syde  
That fro his lust zet were him leuer abyde  
Than doon so high a cheerliisch wrecchednesse  
Agayns fraunchis of alle gentilesce 1524

For which in fewe wordes sayd he þus  
 Madame saith to 3our lord arueragus  
 That siþ I se his grete gentillesse  
 To 3ou. and eek I se wel 3our distresse 1528  
 That him were leuer haue schame and þat were rouþe /  
 Than 3e to me schulde breke 3oure trouþe  
 I haue wel leuer euer to suffre woo  
 Than I departe þe loue bytwix 3ow tuo 1532  
 I 3ow relese madame in to 3our hond  
 Quyt euery seurement and euery bond  
 That 3e han maad to me as her biforn  
 Sith þilke tyme which þat 3e were born [leaf 161] 1536  
 My trouþe I plight I schal 3ow neuer repreue  
 Of no byhest and her I take my leue  
 As of þe trewest and þe beste wif  
 That euer 3it I knew in al my lyf 1540  
 But euery wyf be war of hir byhest  
 On Dorigen remembreþ atte lest  
 Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede  
 As wel as can a knyght wipouten drede 1544  
 Sche þankeþ him vpon hir knees al bare /  
 And hoom vnto hir housbond is sche fare /  
 And told him al as 3e han herd me sayd  
 And be 3e siker he was so wel a-payd 1548  
 That it were impossible me to write  
 what schuld I lenger of þis caas endite  
 Arueragus and Dorigen his wif  
 In souereyn blisse leden forþ here lyf 1552  
 Neuer eft ne was þer anger hem bytween  
 he cherisscheþ hir as þough sche were a queen  
 And sche was to him trewe for euermore /  
 Of þese tuo folk 3e gete for me nomore / 1556  
 ¶ Aurilius þat his cost hap al forlorn  
 Curseþ þe tyme þat euer he was born  
 Allas quod he allas þat I byhight  
 Of pured gold a thousand pound of wight 1560

vnto þis philosophre how schal I doo  
 I se no more but þat I am for-doo  
 Myn heritage moot I needes selle /  
 And ben a begger her may I not duelle 1564  
 And schamen al my kynrede in þis place  
 But I of him may gete better grace  
 But napeles I wol of him assay  
 At certeyn dayes 3eer by 3er to pay 1568  
 And þanke him of his grete curtesye  
 My troupe wol I kepe I wol nouȝt lye  
 with herte soor he goþ vn to his cofre  
 And broughte gold vnto þis philosophre 1572  
 The value of fyf hundred pound I gesse  
 And him bysecheth of his gentilesce [leaf 161, back]  
 To graunte him dayes of þe remenaunt  
 And sayde maister I dar wel make anaunt 1576  
 I fayled neuer of my troupe as ȝit  
 For sikerly my dettes schal be quyt  
 Towardes ȝow how þat euer I fare  
 To goon a begge in my kurtil bare 1580  
 But wolde ȝe vouche sauf vpon seurte  
 Tuo ȝer or þre for to respite me  
 Than were I wel for elles most I selle  
 Myn heritage þer is nomore to telle 1584  
 ¶ þis philosophre sobrelly answerde /  
 And seyde þus whan he þese wordes herde  
 Haue I not holden couenaunt vnto þe ?  
 ȝis certes wel and trewely quod he / 1588  
 Hastow nouȝt had þy lady as þe liketh  
 No no quod he and sorwfully he sikeþ  
 what was þe cause tel me if þou can  
 Aurilius his tale anoon bygan 1592  
 And told him al as ȝe han herd bifore  
 It needeþ nat to ȝou rehearse it more  
 he sayde arueragus of gentilesse  
 had leuer dye in sorwe and in distresse 1596

Than þat his wyf were of hir troupe fals  
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als  
 how loþ hir was to ben a wikked wikked wyf  
 And þat sche leuer had han lost hir lyf 1600  
 And þat hir troupe sche swor þurgh Innocence  
 Sche neuer erst hadde herd speke of apparence  
 That made me han of hir so gret pyte  
 By cause hir housebond sente hir to me 1604  
 And right as frely sent I hir to him agayn  
 þis is al and som þer is no more to sayn  
 The philosopher answerde leue broþer  
 Euerich of 3ow dede gentilly to oper 1608  
 Thow art a squyer and he is a knight  
 But god forbede for his blisful might  
 But if a clerk coupe doon as gentil dede  
 As wel as eny of 3ou it is no drede [leaf 102v] 1612  
 Sire I relese þe þy þousond pound  
 As þou right now were crope out of þe ground  
 Ne neuer er now ne haddest knowen me  
 For sire I wol not take a peny of þe 1616  
 For al my craft ne nought for my trauayle /  
 Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitayle /  
 It is ynough and far wel haue good day  
 And took his hors and forþ he goþ his way 1620  
 ¶ Lordynges þis questioun wolde I axe now /  
 which was þe moste free as þinketh 3ow  
 Now telleþ me or þat I ferþer wende /  
 I can no more my tale is at an ende / 1624  
 ¶ Here endeth þe Frankeleynes tale

[No break in the MS.]

¶ And here bygynneth þe Secounde Nounes tale /

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[*THE PROEM.*]

(1)

<b>T</b>	He minister and þe norice vnto vices	1
	which þat men clepe in englisch ydelnesse /	
	The porter at þe gates is of delicis	
	To eschiewe and by her contrary hire oppresse	
	That is to say by leful besynesse /	5
	wel oughte we to do al oure entente	
	Lest þat þe fend þurgh ydelnesse vs hente /	7

(2)

<b>F</b>	For he þat wip his þousand cordes alye /	8
	Continuelly vs wayteth to byclappe /	
	whan he may man in ydelnes espye /	
	He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe /	
	Til þat a man be hent right by þe lappe /	12
	He is nouȝt war þe fend haþ him in honde /	
	wel oughte we wirche and ydelnes wipstonde /	14

(3)

<b>A</b>	And þough men dredde neuer for to deye	15
	ȝet seen men wel by resoun douteles	
	That ydelnes is roten sloggardy	
	Of which þer cometh neuer good encres	
	And sin þat slouþ her holdeþ in a lees	19
	Oonly to sleep and for to ete and drynke	
	And to deuoure al þat oper swynke	21

## (4)

And for to put vs from such ydelne 22  
 That cause is of so gret confusioun  
 I haue her doon my faithful busynes [leaf 162, back]  
 After þe legende in translacioun  
 Right of þis glorious lif and passioun 26  
 Thou with þi garlond wrought wip rose and lylle  
 The mene I mayde and martir cecilie 28

## (5)

And þou þat flour of virgines art alle / Innocento ad mariam 29  
 Of whom þat Bernard lust so wel to write /  
 To þe at my bygynnyng first I calle  
 Thou comfort of vs wrecches do me endite  
 Thy maydenes dep þat whan þurgh hire merite 33  
 Theternal lif and of þe feend victorie  
 As man may after reden in hir storie 35

## (6)

Thou mayde and moder doughter of þi sone / 36  
 Thow welle of mercy synful soules cure  
 In whom þat god of bountes chees to wone  
 Thou humble and heyh ouer euery creature  
 Thow nobelest so ferforþ oure nature 40  
 That no disdeyn þe maker had of kynde /  
 his sone in blood and fleisshe to cloþe and wynde / 42

## (7)

Wipinne þe cloyster of þi blisful sydes 43  
 Took mannes schap þe eternal loue and pees  
 That of þe trine compas lord and guyde is  
 whom erþe and see and heuen out of relees  
 Ay herien and þou virgine wemmeles 47  
 Bar of þy body and dwellest mayden pure  
 The creatour of euery creature / 49



(8)

Assembled is in þy magnificence	50
with mercy goodnes and with such pitee	
That þou þat art þe sounne of excellence	
But oonly helpist hem þat prayen þe	
But often tyme of þy benignite	54
Ful frely er þat men þin help biseche	
Thou gost biforn and art her lyfes leche /	56

(9)

Now help þou meke and blisful faire mayde /	57
Me flemed wrecche in þis desert of galle	
Thenk on þe womman canace þat sayde	
That whelpes ete some of þe crommes alle	
That from her lordes table ben I-falle /	61
And þough þat I vnworthy sone of Eue	[leaf 163]
Be synful / ȝett accente my bileue	63

(10)

And for þat faith is deth wiþouten werkis	64
So for to werken ȝiue me witt and space /	
That I be quit fro þennes þat most derk is	
O þou þat art so fair and ful of grace /	
Be myn aduocat in þat hihe place /	68
Ther as wiþouten ende is songe Osanne	
Thou cristes moder douȝter deere of Anne	70

(11)

And of þi light my soule in prisoun light	71
That troubled is by þe contagioun	
Of my body and also by þe wight	
Of euerich lust and fals affeccioun	
O heuen of refuyt O sauacioun	75
Of hem þat ben in sorwe and in destresse /	
Now help for to my werk I wil me dresse /	77

## (12)

3et pray I 3ou þat reden þat I write / 78  
 Forȝeue me þat I doo no diligence  
 This ilke story subtilly to endite  
 For boþe haue I þe wordes and sentence  
 Of him þat at þe seintes reuerence 82  
 The story wroot and folwen hir legende /  
 And pray 3ow þat 3e wol my werk amende / 84

(13) [*THE TALE.*]

First wol I 3ow þe name of seint Cecile 85  
 Expoune as men may in hir story se /  
 It is to say on englisch heuenes lilie  
 For pure chastenesse of virginite  
 Or for sche witnesse hadde of honeste 89  
 And grene of conscience and of good fame /  
 The soote sauour lilie was her name 91

## (14)

Or cecile is to say þe way of blynde / 92  
 For sche ensample was by way of techynge  
 Or elles Cecily as I writen fynde  
 Is ioyned by a maner of conioynyng  
 Of heuen and lya and here in figuryng 96  
 The heuen is sette for þought of holynesse /  
 And lya for hir lastyng besynesse / 98

## (15)

Cecili may eek be seyd in þis manere / 99  
 wantyng of blyndnes for hir grete light [leaf 163, back]  
 Of sapience and of þilke þewes cleere /  
 Or elles lo þis maydenes name bright  
 Of heuen and loos comes of which by right 103  
 Men might hir wel þe heuen of peple calle /  
 Ensamble of goode and wise werkes alle 105

(16)

For leos peple in engliss <sup>h</sup> is to say	106
And righ as men may in þe heuen see	
The sonne and moone and sterres euery way	
Right so men gostly in þis mayden free	
Seen of faip þe magnanimite /	110
And eek þe clernes hool of sapience	
And sondry werkes bright of excellence	112

(17)

And right so as þese filosofres wryte	113
That heuen is swyft and round and eek brennyng	
Right so was faire Cecily þe whyte	
Ful swyft and besy euer in good werkyng /	
And round and hool in good perseueryng	117
And brennyng euer in charite ful bright	
Now haue I 3ow declared what sche hight	119

(18)

This mayden bright Cecilie as hir lyf saip	120
was comen of Romainys and of noble kynde /	
And from hir cradel vp fostred in þe faip	
Of crist and bar his gospel in hir mynde	
Sche neuer cessed as I writen fynde	124
Of hire prayer and god to loue and drede	
Byseching him to kepe hir maydenhede	126

(19)

And whan þis mayde schuld vnto a man	127
Y-wedded be. þat was ful 3ong of age	
which þat I-cleped was walirian	
And day was comen of hir mariage	
Sche ful deuout and humble in hir currage	131
vnder hir robe of gold þat sat ful faire	
Hadde next hir fleiss <sup>h</sup> I-clad hir in an heire	133

## (20)

And whil þe organs made melodie / 134  
 To god alloon in herte þus sang' sche /  
 O lord my soule and eek' my body gye  
 Vnwemmed . lest' þat I confounded be /  
 And for his loue þat deyde vpon a tre [leaf 104] 138  
 Euery secound or þridde day sche faste  
 Ay biddyng' in hire orisouns ful faste / 140

## (21)

The nyght' cam and to bedde most' sche goon 141  
 with hir housbond as oft' is þe manere  
 And priuely to him sche sayde anoon  
 O swete and wel biloued spouse deere /  
 Ther is a counseil and 3e wold it heere / 145  
 which þat' right' fayn I wold vnto 3ou saye  
 So that' 3e swere 3e schul it not' bywraye 147

## (22)

Valirian gan fast/ vnto hir swere 148  
 That' for no caas ne þing' þat' mighte be  
 he scholde neuer mo bywrewe hire  
 And þanne at' erst' þus sayde sche  
 I haue an aungel which þat' loueþ me 152  
 That' wiþ gret' loue wher so I wake or slepe  
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe 154

## (23)

[. . . . . No gap in the MS.] 155  
 Iff' 3e me touche or loue in vilonye  
 he right' anoon wil sle 3ou wiþ þe dede  
 And in 3oure 3ouþe þus schulde 3e dye  
 And if' þat' 3e in clene loue me gye 159  
 he wol 3ow loue as me for 3our clennessesse /  
 And schewe to 3ou his ioie and his brightnesse/ 161

(24)

Valirian corrected as god wolde /	162
Answerde agayn if I schal truste þe /	
Let me þat aungel se and him biholde	
And if þat it a verray aungel be /	
Than wol I doon as þou hast prayed me	166
And if þou loue anoper man forsoþe	
Right wip þis swerd þan wol I slee 3ou boþe /	168

(25)

Cecilie answerd anoon right in þis wise	169
If þat 3ow list þe aungel schul 3e see	
So that 3e trowe on crist and 3ou baptise	
Gop forþ to Via apia quod sche /	
That fro þis toun ne stant but myles þre	173
And to þe pore folkes þat þer duelle	
Saith hem right þus. as þat I schal 3ou telle /	175

(26)

Telle hem I cecilie. 3ow vnto hem sent	176
To schewen 3ow þe good vrban þe olde / <span style="float: right;">[leaf 164, back]</span>	
For secre needes and for good entente /	
And whan þat 3e seint vrban han byholde /	
Tel him þe wordes which þat I to 3ow tolde /	180
And whan þat he haþ purged 3ou fro synne	
Than schul 3e se þat aungel er 3e twynne /	182

(27)

Valirian is to þe place y-goon	183
And right as him was taught by his lernynge	
He fond þis holy old vrban anoon	
Among þe seyntes buriels lotynge	
And he anoon wipoute tarynge	187
Did his message and whan þat he it tolde	
vrban for ioye his handes gan vp holde	189

(28)

The teres from his eyzen let he falle	190
Almyȝty lord O. ihū crist quod he /	
Sower of chaste counseil herde of vs alle	
The fruyt of pilke seed of chastite	
That þou hast sowe to Cecilie tak to þe	194,
loo lik a busy bee wipouten gyle /	
The serueþ ay þin owne þral Cecile	196

(29)

For pilke spouse þat sche took right now	197
Ful lyk a fers lyoun sche sendeþ here	
As meek as euer was eny lamb to ȝow	
And wip þat word anon þer gan appere /	
An old man clad in white clopes clere	201
That had a book wip lettres of gold in honde /	
And gan to-forn Valirian to stonde /	203

(30)

Valirian as deed fyl doun for drede	204
whan he him say / and he him vp hente þo	
And on his book right þus he gan to rede /	
O lord. o feith oon god wipouten mo	
On cristendom and oon fader of alle also	208
Abouen alle and ouer alle euery where	
[ . . . . .	210

(31)

. . . . .	211
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	215
. . . . . no gap in the MS.]	
And pope vrban him cristened right þere	217

(32)

Valirian goþ home and fint' Cecilie	218
wipinne his chambre with an aungel stonde /	
This aungel had of' Roses and of' lilie	
Corounes tuo þe which he bar in honde	
And first' to Cecilie as I vnderstonde	[leaf 165] 222
he 3af' þat' oon and after can he take /	
That' oper to valerian hir make	224

(33)

Wip body clene and wip vnwemmed þought'	225
kepeþ ay wel þese corounes þre	
Fro paradys to 3ou I haue hem brought'	
Ne neuer moo ne schul þey roten be	
Ne leese here soote sauour trusteþ me	229
Ne neuer wight' schal seen hem wip his ye	
But/ he be chast' and hate vilonye	231

(34)

And þou valirian for þou so soone	232
Assentedist' to good counseil also	
Say what' þe list' and þou schalt' haue þi boone	
I haue a broþer quod Valirian þo	
That' in þis world I loue no man so	236
I pray 3ow þat' my broþer may haue grace	
To knowe þe troupe as I doo in þis place	238

(35)

The aungel sayde god liketh þy request'	239
And boþe with þe palme of' martirdom	
3e schullen come vnto his blisful feste /	
And with þat' word tiburce his broþer com	
And whan þat' he þe sauour vndernom	243
which þat' þe roses and þe lilies cast'	
wipinne hir hert'/ he gan to wondre fast /	245

## (36)

And sayde I wondre þis tyme of þe 3er 246  
 whennes þat' soote sauour comeþ so  
 Of Rose and lilies þat' I smelle her  
 For þough I had hem in myn hondes tuo  
 The sauour might' in me no depper go 250  
 The swete smel þat in myn hert' I fynde  
 Hath chaunged me al in anoþer kynde 252

## (37)

Valirian sayd tuo corouns haue we 253  
 Snow whyt' and rose reed þat' schinen cleere /  
 whiche þat' þine eyzen han no might to see /  
 And þou smellest' hem þurgh my prayere  
 So schalt' þou seen hem my lieue broþere deere 257  
 If so be þou wilt' wipouten slouþe  
 Bilieuen aright' and knowen verray trouthe / 259

## (38)

Tyburce answerde says þou þus to me [105, back] 260  
 In soþenes or in drem I herkne þis  
 In dremes quod valirian han we be  
 Vnto þis tyme broþer myn I-wys  
 As now at' erst' in troupe oure duellyng' is 264  
 how wost þou þis quod tyburce and in what' wise  
 Quod valirian þat' schal I þe deuyse 266

## (39)

The aungel of god hap me troupe y-taught' 267  
 which þou schalt' seen if' þat þou wilt' reneye  
 The ydols and be clene and elles nouȝt  
 And of þe miracles of þese coronas tweye  
 Seynt' ambrose in his prefas list' to seye 271  
 Solempnely þis noble doctour deere  
 Comendeþ it and saip in þis maneere 273



(40)

The palme of martirdom for to receyue /	274
Seynt Cecilie fulfilled of goddes gifte	
The world and eek hir chamber gan sche weyue /	
witnes tyburces and Cecilies schrifte	
To whiche god of his bounte wolde schifte	278
Corounes tuo of floures wel smellynge	
And made his aungel home þe croune brynge	280

(41)

The mayde hap brought þis men to blisse aboue /	281
The world hap wist what it is worþ certeyn .	
Deuocioun of chastite to loue	
Tho schewed him Cecilie al open and pleyn	
That alle ydoles nys but þing in veyn	285
For þay ben doumbe and þerto þey ben deue	
And chargeþ him his ydoles for to leue	287

(42)

Who so troweþ not þis a best he is	288
Quod tyburce if þat I schal not lye	
And sche gan kisse his brest þat herde þis	
And was ful glad he couþe trouþe espye	
This day I take þe for myn allye	292
Sayde þis blisful faire mayde deere /	
And after þat sche sayde as 3e may heere	294

(43)

Lo right so as þe loue of crist/ quod sche	295
Made me þy brotheres wyf right in þat wyse	
Anoon for myn allye heer take I þe /	
Sin þat þou wilt thyne ydoles despise	[leaf 166]
Go with þi broþer now and þe baptise	299
And make þe clene so þat þou mowe biholde	
The aungeles face of which þy broþer tolde	301

## (44)

Tyburce answerde and sayde broþer dere/ 302  
 First tel me whider I schal and to what man  
 To whom quod he / com forth with good cheere /  
 I wol þe lede vnto þe pope vrbā  
 Til vrbā broþer myn quod valirian 306  
 Quod tyburce wilt þou me þider lede /  
 Me þenkeþ þat it were a wonder dede / 308

## (45)

Ne menist þou nat vrbā quod he þo 309  
 That is so ofte dampned to be deed  
 And woneþ in halkes alway to and fro  
 And dar nouȝt oones putte forþ his heed  
 Men schold him brenne in a fuyr so reed 313  
 If he were founde or if men might him spye  
 And we also to bere him companye 315

## (46)

And whil we seken þilke diuinite 316  
 That is I-hyd in heuen priuely  
 Algate I-brent in þis world schal we be  
 To whom Cecilie answerde bodyly  
 Men mighten wel and skilfully 320  
 This lyf to lese myn oughne dere brother  
 If þis were lyuyng oonly and noon oper 322

## (47)

But þer is better lif in oper place 323  
 That neuer schal be lost drede þe nouȝt  
 which goddes sone vs tolde þurgh his grace  
 The fadres sone þat alle þing hath wrought  
 And al þat wrought is wiþ a skilful þought 327  
 The gost þat fro þe fader gan procede  
 hap sowled hem wiþouten eny drede 329

(48)

By word and miracle hihe goddes sone	330
whan he was in þis world declared heere /	
That þer was oper lyf þer men may wone /	
To whom answerde Tyburce of suster deere	
Ne seydest þou right now in þis manere	334
Ther nys but oo god. o .lord. in soþfastnesse	
And now of þre how maystow bere witnesse [416a, 2x]	336

(49)

That schal I telle quod sche er þat I go	337
Right as a man haþ sapiences þre	
Memorie eyen and intellect also	
So in oo being in diuinite	
Thre persones may þer right wel be	341
Tho gan sche him ful besily to preche /	
Of cristes come and of his peynes teche /	343

(50)

And many pointes of his passioun	344
how goddes sone in þis world was wiþholde	
To doon mankynde pleyn remissioun	
That was I-bounde in synne and cares colde /	
Al þis þing sche vnto Tyburce tolde /	348
And after þis thiburce in good entente	
wiþ valirian to pope vrban he wente /	350

(51)

That þanked god and wiþ glad hert and light	351
he cristened him and made him in þat place /	
Parfyt in his lernynge goddes knyght	
And after þis thiburce gat such grace /	
That euery day he say in tyme and space /	355
The aungel of god and euery maner boone /	
That he god asked / it were sped ful soone	357

## (52)

**I**t were ful hard by ordre for to sayne 358  
 how many wondres Ihc for hem wroughte  
 But atte last to tellen schort and playne ·  
 The sergeantz of þe toun of Rome hem soughte  
 And hem byforn almache þe prefect broughte 362  
 which hem apposed and knew alle here entente  
 And to þe ymage of Iubiter hem sente 364

## (53)

And saide who-so wil not sacrifise 365  
 Swope of his heued þis my sentence heere  
 Anoon þese martires þat I 3ou deuyse  
 Oon maximus þat was an officere /  
 Of þe prefectes and his counceilere / 369  
 hem hent. and whan he forþ þe seyntes ladde  
 him self he wept for pite þat he hadde / 371

## (54)

Whan maximus had herd þe seintes lore 372  
 he gat him of his tormentoures leue  
 And bad hem to his hous wipouten more [leaf 167]  
 And with her preching er þat it were eue  
 Thay gonne fro þe tormentoures to reue 376  
 And fro maxime and fro his folk echoone  
 The false faith to trowe in god alloone 378

## (55)

Cecilie cam whan it was waxen night 379  
 with prestis þat hem cristenid alle in feere /  
 And afterward whan day was waxen light  
 Cecilie hem sayde with a ful stedefast chere /  
 Now cristes owne kny3tes leef and deere 383  
 Cast al away þe werkes of derknes  
 And armith 3ou in armur of brightnes 385

(56)

**3**e han forsoþe y-doon a greet batayle / 386  
 3oure cours is doon 3oure faith han 3e conserued  
 Gop to þe coroun of lyf þat may not fayle /  
 The rightful iugge which þat 3e han serued  
 Schal 3eue it 3ow as 3e han it deserued 390  
 And whan þis þing was sayd as I deuyse  
 Men ladde hem forþ to doon þe sacrifice / 392

(57)

But/ whan þey were to þe place y-brouȝt 393  
 To telle schortly þe conclusioun  
 They nolde encense ne sacrifice right noughȝt  
 But on her knees þey setten hem adoun  
 wip humble hert and sad deuocioun 397  
 And leften boþe her heedes in þe place  
 here soules wenten to þe king of grace / 399

(58)

This maximus þat say þis king betyde / 400  
 wip pitous teeres tolde it anon right  
 That he here soules saugh to heuen glyde  
 with aungels ful of clernes and of light  
 And with his word conuerted many a wight 404  
 For which almachius dede him so bete  
 with whippes of leed til he his lif gan lete / 406

(59)

Cecilie him took and buried him anon 407  
 By Thiburce and valirian softely  
 wipinne hire berieng place vnder þe stoon  
 And after þis almachius hastily  
 Bad his ministres fecchen openly 411  
 Cecilie. so þat sche might in his presence [leaf 167, back]  
 Doon sacrifice and Iubiter encense / 413

## (60)

But þey conuerted at hir wise lore 414  
 wepten ful sore and ȝauen ful credence  
 Vnto hir word and cryden more and more  
 Crist goddes sone wiþouten difference  
 Is verray god þis is al oure sentence / 418  
 That hap so good a seruaunt him to serue  
 This with oon vois we trowen þough we sterue 420

## (61)

Almachius þat herd of þis doynge 421  
 Bad fecchen Cecilie þat he might hir se  
 And alþer first lo þis was his axinge  
 what maner womman art þou quod he  
 I am a gentil womman born quod sche 425  
 I axe þe quod he though þe it greue  
 Of þi religioun and of þi byleue / 427

## (62)

Ȝe han bygonne ȝour questioun folily 428  
 Quod sche þat wolden tuo answers conclude /  
 In oo demaunde ȝe axen lewedly  
 Almache answerde to þat similitude  
 Of whens cometh þin answering so rude 432  
 Of whens quod sche whan sche was I-freyned  
 Of conscience and good faith vnfeyned 434

## (63)

Almachius sayde takest þou noon heede / 435  
 Of my power and sche answerde him þis /  
 Ȝoure might quod sche ful litel is to drede /  
 For euery mortal mannes power nys  
 But lyk a bladder ful of wynd I-wis 439  
 For with a nedeles poynt what it is blowe /  
 May al þe bost of it be layd ful lowe / 441

(64)

Ful wrongfully bygan þou quod he /	442
And 3et in wrong is þy perseueraunce	
wostow nough how oure mighty princes fre	
han þus comaunded and maad ordinaunce	
That euery cristen wight schal haue penaunce /	446
But if þat he his cristendom wipseye	
And goon al quyt if he wil it reneye /	448

(65)

¶ 3oure princes erre as 3oure nobleye dop	449
Quop þo Cecilie and with a wood sentence /	[leaf 168]
3e make vs gulty and it is nou3t sop	
For 3e þat knowen wel oure Innocence	
For as moche as we doon reuerence /	453
To crist and for we bere a cristen name	
3e putten on vs a crym and eek a blame /	455

(66)

But we þat knowen þilke name so	456
For vertuous we may it not wipseye	
Almache sayde cheese oon of þese tuo	
Do sacrifice and cristendom reneye	
þat þou mow now eschafen by þat weye	460
At which þe holy blisful faire mayde /	
Gan for to laughe and to þe Iugge sayde /	462

(67)

O Iugge confus in þis nycete	463
wilt þou þat I refuse Innocence	
To make me a wikked wight quod sche /	
lo he dissimuleþ heer in audience	
he starith and woodith in his aduertence	467
To whom almachius sayde vnsely wrecche /	
Ne wostow nought how fer my might may strecche	469

## (68)

Han nough<sup>t</sup> our mighty princes to me y-ziuen 470  
 3e bothe power and eek<sup>t</sup> auctorite  
 To make folk<sup>t</sup> to deyen or to lyuen  
 why spekestow so proudly þan to me  
 I speke not<sup>t</sup> but<sup>t</sup> stedefastly quod sche 474  
 Nough<sup>t</sup> proudly for I say as for my syde /  
 we haten deedly þilke vice of pryde 476

## (69)

And if þou drede nouzt a sop to heere 477  
 Than wol I schewe al openly by right  
 That þou hast<sup>t</sup> maad a ful greet<sup>t</sup> lesyng<sup>t</sup> heere  
 Thou saist<sup>t</sup> þy princes han I-ziue þe might  
 Boþe for to sleen and eek<sup>t</sup> to quike a wight<sup>t</sup> 481  
 Thou þat ne maist<sup>t</sup> but<sup>t</sup> oonly lif<sup>t</sup> byreue  
 Thou hast<sup>t</sup> noon oþer power ne no leue 483

## (70)

But þou maist<sup>t</sup> sayn þi princes han þe maked 484  
 Minister of<sup>t</sup> dep<sup>t</sup> for if þou speke of<sup>t</sup> moo  
 Thow liest<sup>t</sup> for þy power is ful naked  
 Do way þy lewednes sayd almachius þo  
 And do sacrifice to oure goddes er þou go [*leaf 168, back*] 488  
 I recche nough<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> wrong<sup>t</sup> þat þou me profre /  
 For I can suffre it as a philosophre 490

## (71)

But þilke wronges may I not<sup>t</sup> endure 491  
 That þou spekis of<sup>t</sup> oure goddis her quod he  
 Cecilie answered . O nice creature  
 Thou saydest<sup>t</sup> no word sins þou spak<sup>t</sup> to me /  
 That I ne knew þer-wip þy nicete / 495  
 And þat þou were in euery maner wise /  
 A lewed officer a vein Iustise/ 497



(72)

Ther lakketh no þing to þin outer eyen	498.
That þou art blynd for þing þat we seen alle	
That it is stoon þat men may wel asprien /	
That ilke stoon a god þou wilt it calle /	
I rede þe let þin hond vpon it falle /	502
And tast it wel and stoon þou schalt it fynde	
Sip þat þou seest / not wip þin eyzen blynde	504

(73)

IT is a schame þat þe poeple schal	505
So scorne þe and laughe at þi folye /	
For comunly men woot it wel ouer al	
That mighty god is in his heuen hye	
And þese ymages wel þou mayst espie	509
To þe ne to hemself may nought profyte	
For in effect. þey ben nouȝt worþ a myte	511

(74)

Thise wordes and such oper sayde sche	512
And he wax wroþ and bad men schold hir lede	
hom to hir hous / and in hir hous quod he /	
Brenne hir right in a bath of flammes rede /	
And as he bad right so was doon þe dede /	516
For in a bath þay gonne hir faste schetten	
And nyght and day great fuyr þey vnder betten	518

(75)

The longe night and eek a day also	519
For al þe fuyr and eek þe bapes hete	
Sche sat al cold and felte of no woo	
Hit made hir not. oon drope for to swete	
But in þat bath hir lif sche moste lete	523
For he almachius with ful wikke entente	
To sleen hir in þe baþ his sondes sente	525

## (76)

Thre strokes in þe nek he smot<sup>t</sup> hir þo [leaf 100] 526  
 The tormentour but<sup>t</sup> for no maner chaunce /  
 he might<sup>t</sup> nouȝt<sup>t</sup> smyte hir faire necke a-tuo /  
 And for þer was þat<sup>t</sup> tyme an ordinaunce  
 That<sup>t</sup> no man scholde do man such penaunce 530  
 The ferþe strok<sup>t</sup> to smyten softe or sore /  
 This tormentour ne dorste do no more / 532

## (77)

But<sup>t</sup> half<sup>t</sup> deed with hir nekke coruen there 533  
 he laft<sup>t</sup> hir lye and on his way he went  
 The cristen folk<sup>t</sup> which þat<sup>t</sup> about<sup>t</sup> hir were /  
 wiþ scheetes han þe body ful faire y-hent  
 þre dayes lyued sche in þis torment<sup>t</sup> 537  
 And neuer cessed hem þe faith to teche /  
 That<sup>t</sup> sche had suffred hem sche gan to preche 539

## (78)

And hem sche ȝaf<sup>t</sup> hir moebles and hir þing<sup>t</sup> 540  
 And to þe pope Vrban bytook<sup>t</sup> hem þo /  
 And sayd I axe þis of<sup>t</sup> heuen kyng<sup>t</sup>  
 To haue respit<sup>t</sup> þre dayes and no mo  
 To recomende to ȝow er þat<sup>t</sup> I go 544  
 These soules lo and þat<sup>t</sup> I mighte do wirche  
 heer of<sup>t</sup> myn hous perpetuelly a chirche 546

## (79)

Seynt<sup>t</sup> vrban wiþ his Deken<sup>t</sup>es priuely 547  
 The body fette and buried it by nighte /  
 Among<sup>t</sup> his oþer seyntes honestely  
 hir hous þe chirch of<sup>t</sup> seynt<sup>t</sup> Cecily ȝit highte  
 Seynt<sup>t</sup> vrban halwed it as he wel mighte 551  
 In which in to þis day in noble wyse  
 Men doon to crist<sup>t</sup> and to his seint<sup>t</sup> seruise / 553  
 Here endeth þe secounde Nonne hir tale of<sup>t</sup> þe lif<sup>t</sup> of seint  
 Cecilie

[No break in the MS.]

And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Chanouns ȝeman

¶ *prologus*

**W**han ended was þe lif/ of seynt Cecile  
 Er we fully had riden fyue myle  
 At/ Boughtoun vnder blee vs gan atake

A man þat' cloped was in clopes blake 557

And vnder þat' he had a whit' surplice

his hakeney þat' was a pomely grice

So swete þat' it wonder was to se

It' semed he hadde priked myles þre / 561

The hors eek' þat' his ȝyman rood vpon [leaf 169, back]

So swette þat' vnnepes might' he goon

Aboute þe peytrel stood þe foom ful hye

he was of' foom as flekked as a pye 565

A male tweyfold on his croper lay

It' semed þat' he caried litel array

And light' for somer rood þis worþy man

And in myn herte wondren I bigan 569

what' þat' he was til þat' I vnderstood

how þat' his cloke was sowed vnto his hood

For which whan I long' had auysed me /

I demed him som chanoun for to be 573

his hat' heng' at' his bak' doun by a laas

For he had riden more þan, trot' or paas /

He had I-pryked lik' as he were wood

A cloote leef' he had vnder his hood 577

For swoot' and for to kepe his heed from hete

But' it was ioie for to se him swete

His forhed dropped as a stillatorie

were ful of' plantayn and of' peritorie 581

And whanne þat he was com he gan to crie  
 God saue quod he þis ioly compaignye/  
 Fast haue I priked quod he for 3our sake /  
 By cause þat I wolde 3ou atake 585  
 To ryden in þis mery compaignye /  
 his 3eman eek was ful of curtesye /  
 He seid sires now in þe morwe tyde /  
 Out of 3our ostelry I saugh 3ou ryde / 589  
 And warned heer my lord and my souerayn  
 which þat to ryden with 3ow is ful fayn  
 For his desport/ he loueth daliaunce  
 Frend for þy warnyng' god 3eue þe good chaunce 593  
 Sayde oure host for certes it wolde seme  
 Thy lord were wys and so I may wel deme  
 he is ful iocound also dar I leye  
 Can he ought telle a mery tale or tweye 597  
 with which he glade may þis compaignye  
 who sire my lord / 3e 3e / wipoute lye /  
 He can of merthe and eek of Iolite [leaf 170]  
 Not but ynough also sir trusteþ me 601  
 And 3e him knewe / as wel as do I  
 3e wolde wonder how wel and þriftily  
 he coupe werke and þat in sondry wise  
 he hap take on him many sondry emprise / 605  
 which were ful hard for eny þat is heere  
 To bringe aboute but þay of him it leere /  
 As homely as he ryt amonges 3ow  
 If 3e him knewe it wolde be 3oure prow 609  
 3e nolde nought forgon his aueynsaunce  
 For moche good I dar lay in balaunce  
 Al þat haue in my possessioun  
 he is a man of heigh discessioun 613  
 I warne 3ow wel he is a passyng' man  
 ¶ wel quod our oost/ I pray þe tel me þan  
 Is he a clerk / or noon tel what he is  
 Nay he is gretter þan a clerk I-wis! 617

Sayde þe ȝyman and in wordes fewe /  
 Ost and of his craft somewhat I wil ȝou schewe  
 I say my lord can such subtilite  
 But al his craft ȝe may nought wite of me / 621  
 And somewhat helpe I ȝit to his worchyng  
 That al þis ground on which we ben ridyng  
 Til þat we comen ro Caunterbury toun  
 he coupe al clene turnen vp so doun 625  
 And paue it al of siluer and of gold  
 And whan þis ȝeman hadde þus I-told  
 vnto oure oost / he seyde benedicite  
 This is wonder merueylous to me 629  
 Syn þat þis lord is of so heigh prudence  
 By cause of which men schuld him reuerence /  
 That of his worship rekkeþ he so lite  
 his ouer slop it is not worþ a myte 633  
 As in effect / to him so mot / I go  
 It is al bawdy and to-tore also  
 why is þi lord so slottisch I þe preye  
 And is of power better cloþis to beye / 637  
 If þat his dede accorde with þy speche / [leaf 170, back]  
 Telle me þat and þat I þe biseche /  
 ¶ why quod þis ȝyman / wher-to axe ȝe me  
 God help me so for he schal neuer þe 641  
 But I wol nought avowe þat I say  
 And þerfor kep it secre I ȝou pray  
 he is to wys in faith as I bileue  
 That at is ouer-don it wil nouȝt preue / 645  
 a right. as clerkes sein it is a vice  
 wherfore in þat I holde him lewed and nyce  
 For whan a man haþ ouer greet a witte,  
 Ful ofte him happeth to mysven itte 649  
 So doth my lord and þat me greueþ sore  
 God it amende I can say now nomore  
 Ther-of no fors good ȝeman quod oure Ost  
 Syn of þe connyng of þi lord þou wost 653

Tel how he dop I pray þe hertily  
 Sin þat he is so crafty and so sly  
 wher duellen 3e if it to telle be  
 In þe subarbes of a toun quod he / 657  
 lurking in hirnes and in lanes blynde  
 wher as þese robbours and þeues by kynde /  
 holden here prive ferful residence  
 As þay þat dor nouȝt schewen her presence / 661  
 So faren we if I schal say þe soþe  
 Now quod oure ost ȝit let me talke toþe  
 why artow discoloured on þy face  
 Peter quod he god ȝiue it harde grace 665  
 I am so vsed in þe fuyr to blowe  
 That it hap chaunged my colour I trowe  
 I am not wont in no mirour to prie  
 But swynke sore and lerne to multiplie 669  
 we blondren euer and pouren in þe fuyr  
 And for al þat we faile of oure desir  
 For euer we lacken oure conclusioun  
 To moche folk we ben illusioun 673  
 And borwe gold be it a pound or tuo  
 Or ten or twelue or many sommes mo  
 And make hem wenen atte leste weye [leaf 171]  
 That of a pound we conne make tweye 677  
 ȝit is it fals and ay we han good hope  
 It for to doon and after it we grope /  
 But þat science is so fer vs biforn  
 we mowen nouȝt al þough we had it sworn 681  
 It ouertake it slyt away so fast  
 It wol vs make beggers atte last  
 Whil þis ȝeman was þus in his talkyng  
 This chanoun drough him ner and herd al þing 685  
 which þat þis ȝiman spak for suspeccioun  
 Of mennes speche euer hadde þis chanoun  
 For Catoun saip þat he þat gulty is  
 Demep al þing be spoke of him I-wis 689

By cause of þat / he gan so neigh to drawe  
 his ȝeman þat he herde al his sawe /  
 And þus he sayd vnto his ȝeman þo  
 Hold now þi pees and spek' no wordes mo 693  
 For if þou do þou schalt it deere aby  
 Thow sclaudrest me here in þis companye  
 And eek discourerst þat þou schuldest hide  
 ȝe quod oure ost tel on what so bytyde 697  
 Of alle þis thretyng' recche þe nought a myte  
 In faip quod he no more do I but lite  
 And whan þis chanoun seih it wold not be  
 But his ȝeman wold telle his priuete 701  
 He fledde a way for verray sorwe and schame  
 A quod þis ȝeman her schal arise game  
 Al þat I can anoon now wol I telle  
 Sin he is goon þe foule feend him quelle 705  
 For neuer her after wol I wip him meete  
 For peny ne for pound I wol byheete  
 he þat me broughte first vnto þat game  
 Er þat he deye sorwe haue he and schame 709  
 For it is earnest to me by my fayth  
 That fele I wel what so eny man saith  
 And ȝet for al my smert' and al my greef  
 For al my sorwe and labour and mescheef 713  
 I couþe neuer leue it in no wise [leaf 171, back]  
 Now wolde god my wyt mighte suffise  
 To tellen al þat longeþ to þat art/  
 But napeles ȝet wil I telle ȝou part 717  
 Sin þat my lord is goon I wol nought spare  
 Such þing al þat I knowe I wol declare

[No break in the MS.]

## [THE PREAMBLE.]

¶ Narrat

h þis Chanour I duelled haue seuen þer  
 And of his science am I neuer þe ner 721  
 Al þat I hadde I haue lost þer by  
 And god wot/ so hap many mo þan I /  
 Ther I was wont to be right freisch and gay  
 Of cloþing and of oþer good array / 725  
 Now may I were an hose vpon myn heed  
 And where my colour was boþe freisch and reed  
 Now it is wan and of a leden hewe  
 who-so it vesp sore schal he rewe 729  
 And of my swynk ȝet blended is myn ye  
 Lo such anauntage it is to multiplie  
 That slydyng science had me made so bare /  
 That I haue no good wher þat euer I fare 733  
 And ȝit I am endetted so þer by  
 Of gold I haue borwed trewely  
 That whil I lyue I schal it quite neuer  
 lat euery man be war by me for euer 737  
 what maner man þat casted him þerto  
 If he continue I holde his þrift I-do  
 For so help me god þer by schal he not wynne  
 But empte his purs and make his wittes þynne 741  
 And whan he purgh his madnes and folye /  
 Hap lost his owne good in ieupardie /  
 Than he exciteþ oþer men þer-to  
 To leese her good as he himself hap do 745  
 For vnto schrewes ioye it is and ese /  
 To haue here felawes in peyno and desese /



Thus was I oones lerned of a clerk /  
 Of þat no charge I wol speke of oure werk' 749  
 whan we ben þer as we schul exercise  
 Oure eluyssh craft' we seme wonder wyse  
 Oure termes ben so clergeal and queynte / [leaf 172]  
 I blowe þe fuyr til þat/ myn herte feynte / 753  
 what' schulde I telle ech *proporcioun*  
 Of þinges which þat' we werke vp and doun  
 As an fyue or six ounces may wel be /  
 Of siluer or som oþer quantite 757  
 And besy me to telle ȝow þe names  
 Of Orpiment' brent' bones yren squames  
 That' in to poudre grounden ben ful smal  
 And in an erthen pot/ how þat' put' is al 761  
 And salt' y-put' in and also paupere  
 Biforn these poudres þat' I speke of heere  
 And wel I-couered wip a lamp of glas /  
 And of moche oþer þing' what' þat' þer was 765  
 And of þe pot'. and glas enlutyng'  
 That' of þe aier mighte passe no þing'  
 And of þe esy fuyr and smert' also  
 which þat' was maad and of þe care and wo 769  
 That' we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge  
 And amalgamyng and calcenyng  
 Of quyksiluer y-clept' mercury crude /  
 For alle oure sleightes we can nought' conclude / 773  
 Oure orpiment and sublyment mercurie  
 Oure grounde litarge / eek' on þe porfurye  
 Of ech of þese of ounces a certayn  
 Nat' helpeþ vs oure labour is in vayn 777  
 Ne eek' oure spirites ascencioun  
 Ne eek' our matiers þat' lyn al fix a doun  
 Mowe in oure werkyng' vs no þing' auayle  
 For lost' is al oure labour and trauayle 781  
 And al þe cost' on twenty deuelway  
 Is lost' also which we vpon it lay

Ther is also ful many anoper þing'  
 That is to oure craft' appertenynge' 785  
 Though I by ordre hem here rehearse ne can  
 By cause þat' I am a lewed man  
 Ȝet' wil I telle hem as þey come to mynde /  
 Though I ne conne nought' sette hem in her kynde / 789  
 As bol armoniak' verdegres boras [leaf 172, back]  
 And sondry vessels maad of' erþe and glas  
 Oure vrinals and oure descensories  
 Viols Croslets . and sublimatories 793  
 Concurbites and alembikes eeke  
 And opere suche deere ynough a leeke  
 Nat' needith it' to rehersen hem alle  
 watres rubisynge' and boles galle 797  
 Arsnek' Sal armoniak' and brimstoon  
 And herbes coupe I telle eek' many oon  
 As Egrimoigne Valirian and lunarie,  
 And opere suche if' þat me list' to tarie / 801  
 Oure lampes brennyng' boþe night' and day  
 To bringe aboute oure craft' if' þat' we may  
 Oure fournies<sup>1</sup> eek' of' Calcinacioun [1 or fourmes]  
 And of' watres albificacioun 805  
 Vnslekked lym salt' and glayre of' an ey  
 Poudres dyuers aiseches dong' pisse and cley  
 Cered poketts . Sal petre vitriole  
 And dyuers fuyres maad of' woode and cole / 809  
 Salt' tartre . alcaly and salt' preparat'  
 And combust matieres . and coagulat  
 Cley maad wip hors or mannes her and oyle  
 Of' tartre alym . glas . berm wort' and argoyle 813  
 Resalgar and oure matiers enbibing'  
 And eek' of' oure matiers encorporing'  
 And siluer citrinacioun  
 Oure cementynge and fermentacioun 817  
 Oure yngottes testes and many mo  
 I wol ȝou telle as was me taught' also

The foure spiritz and þe bodies seuen  
 By ordre as ofte herd I my lord neuen 821  
 The firste spirit quyksiluer called is  
 The secound orpiment þe þridde I-wis  
 Sal armoniac. and þe ferþe bremstoon  
 The bodies seuen eek lo hem heer anoon 825  
 Sol gold is and luna siluer we þrepe  
 Mars yren. Mercurie quyksiluer we clepe  
 Saturnus leed and Iubiter is tyn [leaf 173]  
 And Venus coper by my fader kyn 829  
 This cursed craft who so wol excercise  
 he schal no good han þat may him suffise /  
 For al þe good he spendeþ þer aboute  
 he lese schal þer of haue I no doute / 833  
 who-so þat list/ outen his folye  
 let him come forþ and lerne multiplie  
 And euery man that hap ought in his cofre  
 Let him appiere and wexe a filosofre 837  
 Ascauns þat craft is so light to lere /  
 Nay nay god wot al be he monk or frere  
 Prest Chanoun or eny oper wight  
 Though he sit at his book boþe day and night 841  
 In lernyng of þis eluysch nice lore  
 Al is in vayn and parde moche more  
 Is to lerne a lewed man þis subtilte  
 Fy spek not þerof. for it it wil not be 845  
 Al couþe he letterure or couþe he noon  
 As in effect he schal fynd it al oon  
 For boþe tuo by my sauacioun  
 Concluden in multiplicacioun 849  
 I-liche wel whan þay han al y-do /  
 This is to sayn þay fayle boþe tuo  
 3et forȝat I to moche rehersayle  
 Of watres corosif and of lymayle 853  
 And of bodyes mollificacioun  
 And also of here enduracioun

Oyles ablucioun and metal fusible /  
 To tellen al wold passen eny bible 857  
 That owher is wherfore as for þe best  
 Of alle þese names now wil I me rest/  
 For as I trowe I haue ȝow told ynowe  
 To reyse a feend al loke he neuer so rowe / 861  
 A nay let be þy philosophre stoon  
 Elixir clept. we sechen fast echoon  
 For had we him þan were we syker ynough  
 But vnto god of heuen I make avow 865  
 For al oure craft whan we han al y-do [leaf 173, back]  
 And al oure sleight he wol not come vs to  
 He hap I-made vs spende moche good  
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood 869  
 But þat good hope crepeþ in oure hert  
 Supposing euer þough we sore smerte /  
 To ben relieued by him afterward  
 Supposing and hope is scharp and hard 873  
 I warne ȝou wel it is to seken euer  
 That future temps hap made men disseuere  
 In trust þerof from al þat euer þey hadde /  
 ȝet of þat art þay conne nouȝt wexe sadde / 877  
 For vnto hem it is a bitter swete  
 So semeþ it for nad þay but a scheete  
 which þay mighte wrappe hem in a night  
 And a bak to walke Inne by day light 881  
 They wolde hem selle and spenden on þis craft  
 Thay can nought stinte til no þing be laft  
 And euermore wher þat euer þey goon  
 Men may hem knowe by smel of bremston 885  
 For al þe world þay stynken as a goot  
 her sauour is so rammyssch and so hoot  
 That þough a man fro hem a myle be /  
 The sauour wol infecte him trusteþ me 889  
 Lo þus by smellyng and by predbare array  
 If þat men list þis folk þey knowe may /

And if a man wol aske hem priuely  
 why þay ben cloþed so vnþriftily 893  
 Right anon þay rounen in his eere /  
 And say if þat þay espied were  
 Men wold hem slee by cause of here science  
 Lo þus þis folk bytrayen Innocence 897  
 Passe ouer þis I go my tale vnto  
 Er þan þe pot be on þe fuyr y-do  
 Of metals with a certeyn quantite  
 My lord hem tempred and no man but he 901  
 Now he is goon I dar say boldely  
 For as men sayn he can doon craftily  
 Algate I wot wel he haþ such a name [leaf 174]  
 And ȝet ful ofte he rennep in blame 905  
 ¶ And wite ȝe how ful ofte it happeþ so  
 The pot tobrekeþ and far wel al is goo  
 These metals been of so gret violence /  
 Oure walles may not make hem resistance 909  
 But if þay were wrought of lym and stoon  
 Thay percen so and þurgh þe wal þay goon  
 And some of hem synken in to þe grounde/  
 Thus haue we lost by tymes many a pounde 913  
 And some are skatered al þe floor aboute  
 Some lepe in to þe roof wiþouten doute  
 Though þat þe feend nought in oure sight him schewe /  
 I trowe þat he wiþ vs be þat schrewe / 917  
 In helle wher þat he is lord and sire  
 Nis þer no more woo ne anger ne Ire /  
 whan þat oure pot is broke as I haue sayd  
 Euery man chyt and halt him euel a payd 921  
 Som sayd it was long on þe fuyr-makyng  
 Some sayde nay it was on þe blowyng  
 Than was I ferd for þat was myn office /  
 Straw quod þe þridde / ȝe been lewed and nyce 925  
 It was nouȝt tempred as it oughte be /  
 Nay quod þe ferþe stynt and herkne me /

By cause oure fuyr was nought y-maad of Beech  
 That is þe cause and oþer noon so þeech 929  
 I can not telle wher-on it was long  
 But wel I woot gret stryf is vs among  
 What quod my lord þer is no more to doone /  
 Of þese periles I wol be war eft soone / 933  
 I am right siker þat þe pot was crased  
 Be as be may be 3e no þing amased  
 As vsage is let swoope þe floor as swiþe  
 Pluk vp 3our hertes and beþ glad and bliþe 937  
 The mullok on an heep I-swoped was  
 And on þe floor y-cast a caneuas  
 And al þis mulloc in a syue I-þrowe /  
 And sifted and y-plukked many a þrowe 941  
 Par de quod oon somewhat of oure metal [leaf 174, back]  
 3et is þer heer þough þat we haue nought al  
 And þough þis þing myshapped hap a now  
 Anoper tyme it may be wel ynow 945  
 Vs moste putte oure good in aduenture  
 A marchaun / par de may not ay endure  
 Trusteþ me wel in his prosperite  
 Somtyme his good is drowned in þe see / 949  
 And som tyme comeþ it sauf vn-to þe londe /  
 Pees quod my lord þe nexte tyme I wol fonde /  
 To bringe oure craft al in anoper plyte  
 And but I do sire let me haue þe wyte 953  
 Ther was defaute in som what wel I woot  
 Anoper sayde þe fuyr was ouer hoot  
 But be it hoot or cold I dar say þis  
 That we concluden euermor amys 957  
 we faile of þat which þat we wolden haue  
 And in oure madnesse euermore we raue  
 And whan we ben togideres euerichon  
 Eueriche man semeþ a Salamon 961  
 But al þing which þat schineþ as þe gold /  
 Is nought gold as þat I haue herd told

Ne euery appel þat is fair at ye  
Ne is not good what so men clappe or crye 965  
Right so lo fareth it amonges vs  
He þat semeþ wisest by Iesus  
Is most fool whan it/ comeþ to þe preef  
And he þat semeth trewest is a þeef 969  
That schul ȝe knowe er þa I fro ȝow wende /  
By þat I of my tale haue maad an ende /

[*No break in the MS.*]

## [THE TALE.]

Ther is a chanoun of religioun  
 Amonges vs wold infecte al a toun 973  
 Though it as gret were as was Niniue  
 Rome alisaundre troye and oper þre /  
 his sleight and his infinite falsnesse /  
 Ther couþe no man writen as I gesse 977  
 Though þat he mighte lyuen a þousand ȝeer  
 Of al þis world of falsheed nys his peer  
 For in his termes he wol him so wynde [leaf 175]  
 And speke his wordes in so sleygh a kynde 981  
 whan he comune schal wiþ eny wight  
 That he wil make him dote anoon right  
 But it a feend be as himseluen is  
 Ful many a man hath he bygiled er this 985  
 And wol if þat/ he lyue may a while /  
 And ȝet men ryde and goon ful many a myle /  
 Him for to seeke and haue his aqueintaunce /  
 Nought knowyng of his false gouernaunce 989  
 And if ȝow list to ȝeue me audience  
 I wol it telle here in ȝoure presence  
 But worschipful chanouns religious  
 Ne demeþ nought þat I slaundre ȝoure hous 993  
 Al þough my tale of a chanoun be /  
 Of euery ordre som schrewe is par dee /  
 And god forbede þat al a companye  
 Schulde rewe a singuler mannes folye 997  
 To slaundre ȝow is no þing myn entent/  
 But to correcten þat is mys I-ment



This tale was not oonly told for 3ow  
 But eek' for oper moo 3e woot' wel how 1001  
 That among' criste apostles twelue /  
 Ther was no traytour but Iudas himselue  
 Than why schulde þe remenaunt' haue a blame  
 That gultes were by 3ow I say þe same 1005  
 Saue oonly þis if ye wol herkene me  
 If any Iudas in 3oure couent' be  
 Remewe him by tyme I 3ow rede /  
 If schame or los may causen eny drede / 1009  
 And beþ no þing' displesed I 3ou pray  
 But in þis caas herkenep what I say ¶ Narrat  
**I**N londoun was a prest' an annueler  
 That þer In duelled hadde many a 3er 1013  
 which was so plesaunt' and so seruisable /  
 Vnto þe wyf' wher as he was at table  
 That sche wolde suffre him no þing' for to pay  
 For bord ne cloþing' went' he neuer so gay 1017  
 And spendyng' siluer had he right' ynough [*leaf 173, back*]  
 Ther-of' no force I wol procede as now  
 And telle forþ my tale of þe chanoun  
 That brought þis prest' to confusioun 1021  
 This false chanoun cam vpon a day  
 Vnto þe prestes chambre wher he lay  
 Biseching' him to lene him a certeyn  
 Of gold and he wold quy't hit' him ageyn 1025  
 Lene me a mark' quod he but dayes þre /  
 And at my day I wil it quyte þe /  
 And if so be þat þou fynde me fals  
 Anoper day hong/ me vp by þe hals 1029  
 This prest' him took' a mark' and þat' as swithe  
 And þis Chanoun him þankid ofte siþe  
 And took' his leue and wente forþ his wey  
 And atte þridde day brought' his money / 1033  
 And to þe prest' he took' þis gold agayn  
 wher-of' þis prest' was wonder glad and fayn

Certes quod he no þing' annoyeb me  
 To lene a man a noble or tuo or þre/ 1037  
 Or what' þing/ were in my possessioun  
 whan he so trewe is of' condicioun  
 That' in no wise he breke wol his day  
 To such a man I can neuer say nay 1041  
 what' quod þis chanoun schold I be vntrewe?  
 Nay þat' were þing' I-fallen of' þe newe /  
 Troupe is a þing' þat' I wol euer kepe /  
 Vnto þat' day in which þat' I schal crepe 1045  
 In to my graue and elles god forbede /  
 Bilieueth þis as siker as 3our crede /  
 God þank' I and in good tyme be it' sayd  
 That' þer was neuer man zet' euel a-payd 1049  
 For gold ne siluer þat' he to me lent  
 Ne neuer falshed in myn hert' I ment  
 And sire quod he now of' my priuete  
 Syn 3e so goodlich haue be vnto me 1053  
 And kyped to me so gret' gentilesce  
 Som-what' to quyte wip 3oure kyndenesse  
 I wil 3ow schewe and if' 3ow lust/ to lere [leaf 176]  
 [¹I wil 3ow teche pleylnly the manere¹] [¹—¹ In a later hand.] 1057  
 how I kan werken in philosophie  
 Takith good heed. 3e schul seen wel at' ye  
 That' I wol doon a maystry er I go  
 3e quod þe prest'. 3e sire and wol 3e so 1061  
 Mary þer of' I pray 3ow hertily  
 At' 3oure comaundement' sire trewely  
 Quod þe chanoun and elles god forbede  
 Lo how þis þeef' coupe his seruise beede / 1065  
 Ful soth it is þat' such profred seruise  
 Stynkep as witnessen þese olde wise  
 And þat' ful soone I wol it verefye /  
 In þis chanoun roote of' al treccherie 1069  
 That' euermor delit' hap and gladnesse /  
 Such feendly þoughtes in his hert' empresse

How cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe  
 God kepe vs from his fals dissimilynge / 1073  
 what wiste þis prest/ wiþ whom þat he delte  
 Ne of his harm comyng he no þing felte  
 O seely prest. o sely Innocent /  
 wiþ coueytise anoon þou schalt be blent/ 1077  
 O graceles ful blynd is þy conceyt  
 No þing art þou war of þe deceyt  
 which þat þis fox I-schapen hap to þe  
 his wily wrenches y-wis þou maist not fle 1081  
 wherfor to go to þe conclusioun  
 That referreth to þy confusioun  
 Vnhappy man anoon I wil me hie /  
 To tellen þin vnwitte and þy folye / 1085  
 And eek þe falsnesse of þat oper wrecche /  
 Als ferforþ as my connyng wol strecche /  
 This Chanoun was my lord 3e wolde weene  
 Sire ost in faith and by þe heuen queene / 1089  
 It was anoper chanoun and not he  
 That can an hundred fold more subtilte  
 he hath bitrayed folkes many tyme /  
 Of his falnes it dullith me to ryme 1093  
 Euer when I speke of his falshede / [leaf 176, ba .k]  
 For schame of him my cheekes wexen reede/  
 Algates þay bygygne for to glowe /  
 For reednes haue I noon rizt/ wel I knowe / 1097  
 In my visage for fumes diuerse  
 Of metals which 3e han me herd reherse  
 Consumed and wasted han my reednesse  
 Now tak heed of þis chanouns cursednesse / 1101  
 Sir quod he to þe prest let 3our man goon  
 For quyke siluer þat/ we it hadde anoon  
 And let him bringe ounces tuo or thre /  
 And whan he comeþ as faste schul 3e see / 1105  
 A wonder þing which 3e saugh neuer er þis  
 Sire quod þe prest it schal be doon I-wis

He bad his seruaunt<sup>t</sup> fecche him his þinges  
 And he al redy wax at his biddynges 1109  
 And went<sup>t</sup> him forth and com anoon agayn  
 wip þis quyke siluer schortly for to sayn /  
 And took<sup>t</sup> þese ounces þre to þe chanoun  
 And he it layde faire and wel a doun 1113  
 And bad þe seruaunt<sup>t</sup> coles for to bringe  
 That/ he anoon might<sup>t</sup> go to his werkynge  
 The coles right<sup>t</sup> anoon weren I-fett<sup>t</sup>  
 And þis chanoun took<sup>t</sup> out a croselett<sup>t</sup> 1117  
 Out<sup>t</sup> of his bosom and schewed it þe prest  
 This instrument quod he which þat þou sest  
 Tak<sup>t</sup> in þin hond and put þiself<sup>t</sup> þer Inne /  
 Of þis quyksiluer an vnce and her bygynne 1121  
 In þe name of crist to wax a philosophre /  
 Ther ben ful fewe whiche þat I wol profre  
 To schewe hem þus moche of my science  
 For 3e schul seen heer by experience 1125  
 That<sup>t</sup> þis quiksiluer I wol mortifye  
 Right<sup>t</sup> in 3oure sight<sup>t</sup> anoon wipouten lye /  
 And make it as good siluer and as fyn  
 As þer is any in 3oure purs or myn 1129  
 Or elles wher and make it malleable /  
 And elles holdeth. me fals and vnable /  
 Amonges folk<sup>t</sup> for euer to appeere / [leaf 177]  
 I haue a pouder heer þat<sup>t</sup> cost<sup>t</sup> me deere 1133  
 Schal make al good for it is cause of al  
 My connyng<sup>t</sup> which þat<sup>t</sup> I 3ou schewe schal  
 Voydith 3oure man and let<sup>t</sup> him be þer oute  
 And schet<sup>t</sup> þe dore whils we ben aboute 1137  
 Oure priuete<sup>t</sup> þat no man vs aspye /  
 whiles we werken in þis philosophie /  
 Al as he bad fulfilled was in dede /  
 This ilke seruaunt<sup>t</sup> anoon right<sup>t</sup> out 3ede / 1141  
 And his maister schitte þe dore anoon  
 And to here labour speedily þai goon

This prest/ at þis cursed chanouns biddyng  
 Vppon þe fuyr anoon sette þis þing 1145  
 And blew þe fuyr and busied him ful fast/  
 And þis chanoun in to þe croslet cast  
 A pouder noot I wher-of þat it was  
 I-maad ouper of chalk ouper of glas 1149  
 Or som what elles was nouzt worp a flye  
 To blynde wip þis prest and bad him hye  
 These coles for to couchen al aboue  
 The croislet/. for in tokenyng I þe loue 1153  
 Quod þis chanoun þin oughne handes tuo  
 Schal wirche al þing which þat schal be do  
 Graunt mercy quod þe prest and was ful glad  
 And couchede coles as þe chanoun bad 1157  
 And whil he besy was. þis feendly wrecche  
 This false chanoun þe foule feend him fecche  
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole  
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole / 1161  
 And þer-In put was of siluer lymayle /  
 And vnce and stopped was wipoute fayle  
 This hole with wax to kepe þe lymail In /  
 And vnderstondith þat þis false gyn 1165  
 was not maad þer but it was maad bifore  
 And oper þinges I schal telle more /  
 Her afterward which þat he with him brought  
 Er he com þere to bigyle him he þought / 1169  
 And so he dede er þay wente atwynne [leaf 177, back]  
 Til he had torned him coupe he nought blynne /  
 It dulleþ me whan þat I of him speke /  
 On his falshede fayn wold I me wreke / 1173  
 If I wist how but he is heer and þere  
 he is so variant he byt no where /  
 But takeþ heed now sires for goddes loue  
 He took his cole of which I spak aboue / 1177  
 And in his hond he bar it priuely  
 And whiles þe preste couched bysily

The coles as I tolde 3ow er þis  
 This chanoun sayde freend 3e doon amys 1181  
 This is not couched as it oughte be  
 But soone I schal amenden it quod he /  
 Now let me melle þer with but a while /  
 For of 3ow haue I pitee by seint Gile 1185  
 3e been right hoot / I se wel how 3e swete  
 haue heer a cloþ and wype a-way þe wete  
 And whiles þat þis prest him wyped haas  
 This chanoun took his cole I schrewe his faas 1189  
 And layd it abouen on þe mydward  
 Of þe croslet/ and blew wel afterward  
 Til þat þe coles gonne faste brenne  
 Now 3eue vs drinke quod þe chanoun þenne / 1193  
 Als swipe al schal be wel I vndertake  
 Sitte we doun and let vs mery make /  
 And whan þe chanouns bechene cole /  
 was brent al þe lymail out of þe hole 1197  
 In to þe crosselet anoon fel a doun  
 And so it moste needes by resoun  
 Sins it so euen aboue couched was  
 But þer of wist þe prest no þing allas 1201  
 He demed alle þe colis I-liche goode  
 For of þe sleight he no þing vnderstood  
 And whan þis alcamister saugh his tyme  
 Rys vp sire prest quod he and stonde byme 1205  
 And fo I wot wel Ingot haue 3e noon  
 Goth walkith forth and brynge a chalkstoon  
 For I wol make it of þe same schap [leaf 178]  
 That is an Ingold if I may haue hap / 1209  
 And bringe with 3ou a bolle or a panne  
 Ful of water and 3e schul wel se þanne /  
 how þat oure besynes schal happe and preue  
 And 3it for 3e schul haue no mysbileeue 1213  
 Ne wrong conceyt of me in 3oure absence  
 I ne wol nought ben out of 3oure presence /

But go with ȝou and come wiȝ ȝou agayn  
 The chambur dore schortly for to sayn 1217  
 Thay opened and schette and wente forȝ here weye  
 And forth with hem ȝey caryed ȝe keye /  
 And comen agayn wiȝouten eny delay /  
 what' schuld I tary al ȝe longe day 1221  
 he took' ȝe chalk/ and schop it in ȝe wise /  
 Of' an Ingot' as I schal ȝow deuyse /  
 I say he took' out' of' his oughne sleeue  
 A teyne of siluer euel mot' he cheeue 1225  
 which ȝat' was but' an vnce of' wight'  
 And takeȝ heed now of' his cursed slight'  
 he schop his Ingot'/ in lengȝe and in brede /  
 Of' ȝis teyne wiȝouten eny drede 1229  
 So sleighly ȝat' ȝe prest' it nought' aspyde  
 And in his sleeue agayn he gan it hyde /  
 And fro ȝe fuyr he took' vp his mateere /  
 And in to ȝe Ingot' put' it' with mery cheere / 1233  
 And in to ȝe watir vessel he it cast'  
 whan ȝat' him list and bad ȝis prest as fast'  
 Loke what' ȝer is put in ȝin hond and grope  
 Thou fynde ȝer siluer schalt' as I hope / 1237  
 what' deuel of' helle schold it elles be /  
 Schauyng' of' siluer siluer is par de  
 He putte in his hond and tok' vp a teyne  
 Of' siluer fyn and glad in euery veyne' 1241  
 was ȝis prest' whan he saugh it was so  
 Goddes blessyng' and his modres also  
 And alle halwes haue ȝe sire chanoun  
 Seyde ȝe prest' and I her malisoun 1245  
 But' and ȝe vouche sauf' to teche me [leaf 178, back]  
 This nobil craft' and ȝis subtilite  
 I wil be ȝoure in al ȝat' euer I may  
 Quod ȝis chanoun ȝet' wol I make assay 1249  
 The secound tyme ȝat' ȝe mow taken heede  
 And ben expert' of' ȝis and in ȝour neede

Anoper day 3our self in myn absence  
 This discipline and þis crafty science 1253  
 Let take another vnce quod he þo  
 Of quyksiluer wipouten wordes mo  
 And do þer with as 3e haue doon er þis  
 wip þat oper which now siluer is 1257  
 The prest him busyeth in al þat he can  
 To doon as þis chanoun þis cursed man  
 Comaunded him and faste blew þe fuyr  
 For to come to theeffect of his desyr 1261  
 And þis chanoun right in þe mene while  
 Al redy was þis prest eft to bygile  
 And for a countenaunce in his hond bar  
 An holow stikke tak keep and be war 1265  
 In þende of which an vnce and no more  
 Of siluer lymail put was as bifore  
 was in his cole and stopped wip wex wel  
 For to kepe in his limail euery del 1269  
 And whil þe prest/ was in his besynesse  
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse /  
 To him anoon and his pouder cast In  
 As he dede er þe deuel out of his skyn 1273  
 him torne I pray to god for his falshede  
 For he was euer fals in oth and deede  
 And wip þis stikke alone þe croslet  
 That was ordeyned wip þat false get 1277  
 He styred þe coles til relente gan  
 The wex agayn þe fuyr as euery man  
 But/ it a fool be woot wel it moot nede /  
 And al þat in þe hole was out 3ede / 1281  
 And in to þe creslet hastily it fel  
 [¹Now good sires what wol 3e bet þen wel? [¹ In a later hand.]  
 whan þat þis prest thus was begiled a-gayn,¹]  
 Supposyng not but troupe sob to sayn [leaf 179] 1285  
 he was so glad þat I can nought/ expresse /  
 In no maner his myrþe and his gladnesse



And to þe chanoun he profred eft' soone  
 Body and good 3e quod þe chanoun soone / 1289  
 Though pore I be crafty þou schalt' me fynde /  
 I warne þe 3et' is þer more byhynde  
 Is þer any copper her Inne quod he  
 3e sir quod þis prest' I trowe þer be 1293  
 Ell's go bye som and þat' as swithe  
 Now goode sire go forth þy way and hythe  
 he went/ his way and with þis copper cam  
 And þis chanoun it' in his hondes nam 1297  
 And of' that' copper weyed out' but' an ounce  
 Al to simple is my tongue to pronounce  
 The minister and of' his witt þe doublenesse /  
 Of þis chanoun roote of' cursednesse 1301  
 he semed frendly to hem þat' knew him nought'  
 But' he was fendly bope in werk' and þought'  
 It' weriep me to telle of' his falsnesse /  
 And napeles 3it wol I it expresse 1305  
 To þat entent men may be war þer by  
 And for noon oper cause trewely /  
 he put' þis vnce of' copper in þe croslet'  
 And on þe fuyr als swithe he hap it set' 1309  
 And cast' in pouder and made þe prest/ to blowe  
 And in his worching' for to stoupe lowe  
 As he dede er and al nas but a iape  
 Right' as him list' þe prest' he made his ape / 1313  
 And afterward in þe Ingot' he it cast'  
 And in þe panne putte it' atte last/  
 Of' water and in he put his owne hond  
 And in his sleeue as 3e byforenhond 1317  
 herde me telle he had a siluer teyne  
 he sleyghly took' it out' þis cursed heyne  
 Vnwitynge þis prest' of' his false craft/  
 And in þe pannes botme he hap it laft' 1321  
 And in þe water rumbleþ to and fro  
 And wonder priuely took' vp also

The copper teyne nought knowyng' þis prest'  
 And hidde it and hent' him by þe brest/ 1325  
 And to him spak' and þus sayde in his game  
 Stoupeth a-doun by god 3e ben to blame  
 helpeþ me now as I dede 3ow whil er  
 Put' in 3our hond and loke what is þer 1329  
 This prest' took' vp þis siluer teyne anoon  
 And þanne sayde þe chanoun let vs goon  
 wip þese þre teynes whiche þat' we han wrought'  
 To som goldsmyth and wite if' it be ought' 1333  
 For by my faith I nolde for myn hood  
 But' if' þey were siluer fyn and good  
 And þat' as swiþe proued schal it be  
 Vnto þe goldsmith wip þese teynes þre 1337  
 Thay went' and putte þese teynes in assay  
 To fuyr and hamer might' no man say nay  
 But' þay were as hem oughte be  
 This sotted prest' who was gladder þan he // 1341  
 was neuer brid gladder agayn þe day  
 Ne nightyngale in þe sesoun of' may  
 was neuer noon þat' liste better to synge /  
 Ne lady lustier in carolynges 1345  
 And for to speke of' loue and wommanhede  
 Ne knyght' in armes doon an hardy deede/  
 To stonde in grace of' his lady deere  
 Than hadde þis prest' þis craft' for to lere 1349  
 And to þe chanoun thus he spak' and seyde  
 For þe loue of' god þat' for vs deyde  
 And as I may deserue it vnto 3ow  
 what' schal þis receyt' coste telleþ now 1353  
 By oure lady quod þe chanoun it is deere  
 I warne 3ow wel for sire I and a freere  
 In Engelond þer can man it make /  
 No fors quop he now sire for goddes sake / 1357  
 what' schal I paye telleþ me I pray  
 I-wis quod he it is ful dere I say

Sire at a word if þat 3e lust it haue  
 3e schul pay fourty pound so god me saue / [leaf 180] 1361  
 And nere þe frendschipe þat 3e dede er þis  
 To me. 3e schulde paye more I-wys  
 This prest þe somme of fourty pound anon  
 Of nobles fette and took hem euerychoon 1365  
 To þis chanoun for þis ilk receyt  
 Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceyt/  
 Sire prest he seyde I kepe haue no loos  
 Of my craft for I wold it kept were cloos 1369  
 And as 3e loueth me kepeþ it secre  
 For and men knewe / al my sotilte  
 By god men wolden haue so gret enuye  
 To me by cause of my philosophie 1373  
 I schulde be deed þer were noon oþer weye  
 God it forbede quop þe prest what seye  
 3et had I leuer spenden al þe good  
 which þat I haue and elles wax I wood 1377  
 Than þat 3e schulde falle in such meschief  
 For 3our good wil sir haue 3e right good preef  
 Quop þe chanoun and far wel graunt mercy  
 he went his way and neuer þe prest him sey 1381  
 After þis day and whan þat þis prest scholde /  
 Maken assay at such tyme as he wolde /  
 Of þis receyt far wel it wold not be /  
 lo þus byiaped and bygilt was he 1385  
 Thus makeþ he his introduction  
 To bringe folk to here destruccioun  
 Considereth sires how þat in ech astaat  
 Bitwixe men and gold þer is debaat 1389  
 So ferforth þat vnneþe þer is noon  
 This multiplying blent so many oon  
 That in good faith I trowe þat it be /  
 The cause grettest of which skarsete 1393  
 Philosophres speken so mistyly  
 In þis craft þat men conne not come þer by

For any witt þat' men han now on dayes  
 They may wel chiteren as doon þese iayes 1397  
 And in here termes sette lust' and peyne  
 But' to her purpos schul þay neuer atteyne [leaf 180, back]  
 A man may lightly lerne if' he haue ought  
 To multiplie and bringe his good to nought 1401  
 Lo such a lucre is in þis lusty game/  
 A mannes mirþe it wol torne in to grame /  
 And empte also grete and heuy purses  
 And make folk' to purchase curses 1405  
 Of hem þat' han her good þer-to I-lent  
 O fy for schame þay þat' haue be brent  
 Allas can þay not fle þe fuyres hete  
 3e þat' it vsen I rede 3e it lete 1409  
 lest' 3e lesen al for bet' þan neuer is late  
 Neuer to priue were to long' a date /  
 Though 3e prolle ay 3e schul it neuer fynde  
 3e ben as bolde as is bayard þe blynde 1413  
 That' blundreþ forþ and peril casteth noon  
 he is as bold to renne a-gayn a stoon  
 As for to go bysides in þe wey /  
 So fare 3e þat' multiplie I sey 1417  
 If' þat' 3oure y3en can nought' seen aright'  
 loke þat' 3oure mynde lakke nought' his sight'  
 For þough 3e loke neuer so brode and stare /  
 3e schul nought' wynne vpon þat' chaffare / 1421  
 But' wasten al þat' þay may rape and renne  
 wiþdrawe þe fuyr lest' it so faste brenne  
 Medleþ no more wiþ þat' art' I mene /  
 For 3if' 3e doon 3oure þrift' is goon ful clene 1425  
 And right' as swithe I wol 3ow telle heere  
 what' þat' þe philosophres sein in þis mateere /  
 ¶ lo þus saip arnold of' þe newe toun  
 As his Rosarie maketh mencion 1429  
 He saith right' þus wiþouten eny lye  
 Ther may no man mercury mortifye

But hit be with his broþer knowleching  
 how þat he which þat first sayd þis þing 1433  
 Of philosophres fader was hermes  
 he saip how þe dragoun douteles  
 he dyep nought but if þat he be slayn  
 wiþ his broþer and þat is for to sayn [leaf 181] 1437  
 By þe dragoun mercury and noon oþer  
 he vnderstood and brimstoon be his broþer  
 That out of sol and luna were I-drawe  
 And þerfore sayde he take heed to my sawe / 1441  
 Let no man besy him þis art to seche /  
 But þat he thentencioun and speche /  
 Of philosophres vnderstonde can  
 And if he do he is a lewed man 1445  
 For þis sciens and þis connyng quod he  
 Is of þe secre of secretz par de  
 Also þer was a disciple of plato  
 That on a tyme sayde his maister to 1449  
 As his book somer wil bere witnesse  
 And þis was his demaunde in sothfastnesse /  
 Tel me þe name of þe priue stoon  
 And plato answered vnto him anon 1453  
 Take þe stoon þat titanos men name /  
 which is þat quod he magnasia is þe same  
 Sayde plato 3e sire and is it þus  
 This ignotus per ignotius 1457  
 what is magnasia good sir I 3ou pray  
 It is a water þat is maad I say  
 Of elementes foure quod plato  
 Telle me þe rooche good sire quod he þo 1461  
 Of þat water if it be 3our wille  
 Nay nay quod plato certeyn þat I nylle  
 The philosophres sworn were euerich oon  
 That thay scholde discouere it vnto man noon 1465  
 Ne in no book it write in no manere /  
 For vnto crist it is so leef and deere

That he wil not þat it discouered be /  
 But wher it likeþ to his deite / 1469  
 Man to enspire and eek for to defende  
 whom þat him likeþ lo þis is þe ende  
 Than conclude I þus syn god of heuene /  
 Ne wol not þat þe philosophres neuene / 1473  
 how þat a man schal come vnto þis stoon  
 I rede as for þe beste let it goon [Leaf 181, back]  
 For who-so makeþ god his aduersarie  
 As for to werke eny þing in contrarie 1477  
 Vnto his wil certes neuer schal he þriue  
 Though þat he multiplie terme of al his lyue  
 And þer a poynt for ended is my tale  
 God send euery trewe man boote of his bale / 1481  
 ¶ Here endeth þe chanouns zeman his tale

[No break in the MS.]

## GROUP C. FRAGMENT IV.

### § 1. THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

HARLEIAN MS. 7334 (British Museum).

¶ And here bygynneth þe tale of þe Doctor of of phisik  
 Ther was as telleþ Thitus lyuius 1  
 A knight þat cleped was virginieus  
 Fulfuld of honours and of worþines  
 And strong of frendes and of gret riches 4  
 A doughter he hadde by his wyf  
 And neuer ne hadde he mo in al his lyf  
 Fair was þis mayde in excellent beaute  
 Aboue euery wight that men may se 8  
 For nature haþ wip souereyn diligence  
 I-formed hir in so gret excellence  
 As þough sche wolde say lo I nature  
 þus can I forme and peynte a creature 12  
 whan þat/ me lust who can me counterfete  
 Pigmalion nouzt þough he alwey forge and bete /  
 Or graue or peynte for I dar wel sayn  
 appollus zepherus schulde wirche in vayn 16  
 To graue or paynte or forge & bete  
 If þay presumed me to counterfete  
 For he þat is þe former principal  
 haþ maad me his viker general 20  
 To forme and peynte erþely creature  
 Right as me lust al þing is in my cure  
 Vnder þe moone þat may wane and waxe  
 And for my werke noþing wol I axe 24

My lord and I ben fully at accord  
 I made hir to be worschip of my lord  
 So do I alle myn oþer creatures  
 what colour þat þay been or what figures / 28  
 Thus semeþ me þat nature wolde say  
 This mayde was of age twelfþ ȝer and tway [leaf 182]  
 In which þat nature haþ suche delite  
 For right as sche can peynte a lili white 32  
 And rody a rose right with such peynture  
 Sche peynted haþ þis noble creature  
 Er sche was born vpon her limes fre  
 were als bright as such colour schulde be 36  
 And phebus deyed hadde hire tresses grete  
 I-lyk to be stremes of his borned hete  
 And if þat excellent was hir beaute  
 A þousand fold more vertuous was sche 40  
 And hire ne lakkeþ no condicioun  
 That is to preyse as by discrecioun  
 As wel in body as goost chaste was sche  
 For which sche floured in virginite 44  
 with alle humilite and abstinence  
 with alle attemperaunce and pacience  
 with mesure eek and beryng of array  
 Discret sche was in answeyng alway 48  
 Though sche were wis pallas dar I sayn  
 hir facound eek ful wommanly and playn  
 Noon countrefeted termes hadde sche  
 To seme wys but after hir degre 52  
 Sche spak and alle hire wordes more and lesse  
 Sovnyng in vertu and in gentillesse  
 Schamefast sche was in maydenes schamfastnesse  
 Constant in hert. and euer in besynesse 56  
 To dryue hire out of hir slogardye  
 Bachus had of hir mouþ no maistrye  
 For wille and þought doon venus encrece  
 As men in fuyr wil caste oyle or grece 60



And of hir oughne vertu vnconstreigned  
 Sche hap ful ofte tyme hire seek' y-feyned  
 For þat' sche wolde fleen þe companye  
 wher likly was to treten of' folye 64  
 As is at festes reueles and at daunces  
 That' ben occasiouns of' daliaunces  
 Such þinges maken children for to be /  
 To soone rype and bold . as men may se / [leaf 182, back] 68  
 which is ful perilous and hap ben 3ore  
 For al to soone may sche lerne lore  
 Of' boldenesse whan sche is a wyf'  
 And 3e maystresses in 3oure olde lyf' 72  
 That' lordes doughtres han in gouernaunce  
 Ne takeþ of' my word no displesaunce /  
 Thinges þat ben set' in gouernynge  
 Of' lordes dou3tres oonly for tuo þinges / 76  
 Ouper for 3e han kept' 3our honeste  
 Oper elles for 3e han falle in frelete  
 And knowe wel y-nough þe olde daunce .  
 And conne forsake fully meschaunce 80  
 For euermo þerfore for cristes sake /  
 kepeþ wel þo þat' 3e vndertake  
 A þeof' of' venesoun þat' hap forlaft'  
 his licorousnesse and al his theues craft' 84  
 Can kepe a forest' best' of' eny man  
 Now kepe hir wel for and 3e wil 3e can  
 loke wel to no vice 3e assent'  
 lest' 3e be dampned for 3our wikked entent 88  
 For who-so dop a traytour is certayn  
 And takeþ keep of' þat' þat' sche schal sayn  
 Of' al tresoun souereyn pestilence  
 Is whan a wight' bytrayeth Innocence 92  
 3e fadres and 3e modres eek' also  
 Though 3e han children be it' oon or mo  
 3oure is þe charge of' al her sufferance  
 whiles þay be vnder 3our gouernaunce / 96

Beth war þat by ensample of þoure lyuyng  
 Ouper by necgligence in chastisyng  
 That þay ne perische for I dar wel seye  
 If þat þay doon þe schul ful sore abeye 100  
 vnder a schepherd softe and necligent  
 The wolf hap many a schep and lamb torent  
 Sufficeþ oon ensample now as here  
 For I moot turne aȝein to my matiere 104  
 This mayde of which I telle my tale expresse  
 So kept hir self hir neded no maystresse [leaf 133]  
 For in hir lyuyng maydens mighte rede  
 As in a book euery good word and dede / 108  
 That longeþ vnto a mayden vertuous  
 Sche was so prudent and so bounteous  
 For þe which out sprong on euery syde /  
 Boþe of hir beaute and bounte wyde 112  
 That þurgh þe lond þay praysed hir ilkoone /  
 That louede vertu saue enye alloone /  
 That sory is of oþer mennes wele /  
 And glad is of his sorwe and vnhele 116  
 The doctor made þis descripcioun  
 This mayde wente vpon a day in to þe toun  
 Toward þe temple with hir moder deere  
 As is of ȝonge maydenes þe manere 120  
 Now was þer a Iustice in þe toun  
 That gouernour was of þat Region  
 And so bifel þis Iuge his eyȝen cast  
 Vpon þis mayde auysing hir ful fast 124  
 As sche cam forby þer þe Iuge stood  
 Anoon his herte chaunged and his mood  
 So was he caught wip beaute of þis mayde  
 And to himself ful priuely he sayde 128  
 This mayde schal be myn for any man  
 Anoon þe feend in to his herte ran  
 And taughte him sodeinly by what alighte  
 This mayde to his purpos wyne he mighte / 132

For certes by no fors ne by no meede  
him þought he was not able for to speede /  
For sche was strong of frendes and eek sche  
Conformed was in such souerayn bounte 136  
That wel he wist he might hir neuer wynne  
As for to make hir with hir body synne  
For which wiþ gret deliberacioun  
he sent after a clerk was in þe toun 140  
The which he knew for subtil and for bold  
This Iuge vnto þe clerk his tale hap told  
In secre wyse and made him to assure  
He schulde telle it to no creature [leaf 133, back] 144  
And if he dede he schulde lese his heed  
whan þat assented was þis cursed reed  
Glad was the Iuge and made glad cheere /  
And ȝaf him ȝiftes precious and deere / 148  
whan schapen was al þis conspiracye /  
Fro poynt to poynt how þat his lecherie  
Parformed scholde be ful subtilly  
As ȝe schul here afterward openly / 152  
hom goþ þis clerk þat highte Claudius  
This false Iuge þat highte apius  
So was his name for it is no fable  
But knowen for a storial þing notable 156  
The sentence of hit sop is out of doute  
This false iugge goþ now fast aboute /  
To hasten his delit al þat he may /  
And so bifel soone after on a day 160  
This false Iuge as telleþ vs þe story  
As he was wont sat in his consistory  
And ȝaf his domes vpon sondry caas  
This false clerk com forth a ful good paas 164  
And saide lord if þat it be ȝour wille  
As doþ me right vpon þis pitous bille  
In which I pleyne vpon virgilius  
And if he wile seyn it is nouȝt þus 168

I wil proue hit and fynde good witnesse  
 That soþ is þat my bulle wol expresse /  
 The Iuge answerd of þis in his absence  
 I may not ȝiue diffinityf sentence 172  
 let do him calle and I wol gladly hiere  
 Thou schalt haue alle right and no wrong heere  
 Virginius com to wite þe Iugges wille /  
 And right anoon was red þis cursed bille 176  
 The sentence of hit was as ȝe schul heere  
 ¶ To ȝow my lord sire apius so deere  
 Scheweþ ȝoure pore seruaunt Claudius  
 how þat a knight called Virginius 180  
 Aȝeins þe lawe aȝens alle equyte /  
 holdeth expresse aȝeinst þe wille of me [leaf 184]  
 My seruaunt which þat my thral is by right  
 which fro myn hous was stolen on a night 184  
 whiles sche was ful ȝong þat wol I preue  
 By witnesse lord so þat ȝe ȝow not greue  
 Sche is nought his douȝter what so he say  
 wherfore to ȝow my lord þe Iugge I pray 188  
 ȝelde me my þraht if þat it be ȝour wille  
 lo þis was al þe sentence of þe bille  
 Virgineus gan vpon þe clerk byholde  
 But hastily er he his tale tolde 192  
 he wolde haue proued it as schold a knight  
 And eek by witnessyng of many a wight  
 That al was fals þat sayde his aduersarie  
 This cursed Iuge wold no lenger tarye / 196  
 Ne heere a word more of virgineus  
 But ȝaf his Iugement and saide þus  
 I deme anoon þis clerk his seruaunt haue  
 Thou schalt no lenger in þin hous hir haue 200  
 Go bringe hir forþ and put hir in oure warde  
 This clerk schal haue his thral thus I a-warde  
 And whan þis worpy knight virgineus  
 Thurgh þassent of þis Iuge apius 204

Moste by force his deere douȝter ȝiuen  
 Vnto þe Iuge in lecchery to lyuen  
 he goþ him hom and sette him in his halle /  
 And leet' anon his deere douȝter calle / 208  
 And wiþ a face deed as aisschen colde  
 vpon hir humble face he gan byholde  
 with fadres pite stiking' þorugh his herte  
 Al wolde he from his purpos not conuerte / 212  
 Doughter quod he *virginea* by þy name  
 Ther ben tuo weyes eyþer deþ or schame  
 That' þou most' suffre alas þat I was bore  
 For neuer þou deseruedest' wherfore 216  
 To deyen with a swerd or with a knyft  
 O deere doughter ender of' my lif  
 which I haue fostred vp with such plesaunce ·  
 That' þou nere oute of' my remembraunce [leaf 184, back] 220  
 O doughter which . þat art my laste wo  
 And in þis lif' my laste ioye also  
 O gemme of' chastite in pacience  
 Tak' þou þy deth for þis is my sentence 224  
 For loue and not' for hate þou most' be deed  
 My pitous hond mot' smyten of' þin heed  
 ·Allas þat' euer apius þe say  
 Thus haþ he falsly iugged þe to day 228  
 And told hir al þe caas as ȝe bifore  
 han herd . it nedeth nought' to telle it more  
 Mercy deere fader quod þis mayde  
 And with þat' word sche boþe hir armes layde / 232  
 Aboute his nekke as sche was wont to doo  
 The teeres brast' out' of' hir eyȝen tuo  
 And sayde goode fader schal I dye  
 Is ther no grace is þer no remedye 236  
 No certeyn deere doughter myn quod he /  
 Than ȝeue me leue fader myn quod sche /  
 My deþ for to compleyne a litel space /  
 For par dy Ieffa ȝaf' his douȝter grace 240

For to compleyne er he hir slough allas  
 And God it woot no þing was hir trespas  
 But þat sche ran hir fader first/ to se  
 To welcome him with gret solempnite 244  
 And with þat word a swoun sche fel anoon /  
 And after whan hir swownyng was agoon  
 Sche riseþ vp and to hir fader sayde /  
 Blessed be god þat I schal deye a mayde / 248  
 3eue me my deth er þat I haue a schame  
 Do with 3our child 3our wille a goddes name  
 And with þat word sche prayed him ful ofte  
 That wip his swerd he schulde smyte hir softe 252  
 And wip þat word on swoune doun sche fel  
 hir fader with ful sorwful hert and fel  
 hir heed of smoot and by þe top it hente  
 And to þe Iuge bigan it to presente 256  
 As he sat in his doom in concistory  
 whan the Iuge it say as saip the story [leaf 185]  
 he bad take him and honge him faste  
 But right anoon alle þe poeple in praste / 260  
 To saue þe knight for roupe and for pite  
 For knowen was þe fals iniquite /  
 The poeple anoon had suspect in þis þing  
 By moner of þis clerkes chalengyng 264  
 That it was by thassent of apius  
 That wiste wel þat he was leccherous  
 For which vnto þis Apius þay goon  
 And casten him in prisoun right anoon 268  
 wher as he slough himself and Claudius  
 That seruaunt was vnto þis Apius  
 was demed for to honge vpon a tree  
 But virgineus of his grete pite 272  
 Prayde for him þat he was exiled  
 And elles certes he had ben bigiled  
 The remenaunt were anhangd more and lesse /  
 That were consented to þis cursednesse / 276

Her may men se how synne hath his merite  
Be war for no man woot how god wol smyte /  
In no degre ne in which maner wise  
The worm of conscience wol arise 280  
Of wicked lyf pough it so pryue be  
That no man woot of it but god and he  
wher þat he be lewed man or lered  
He not how soone þat he may be afered 284  
Therefore I rede ȝow this counseil take  
Forsakith synne / er synne yow forsake  
¶ Here endeth þe Doctor of phisique his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ And here bygynneth þe prologe of the Pardoner /

**O**wre ost gan swere as he were wood  
 harrow quod he by nayles and by blood 288

This was a cursed þef a fals Iustice  
 As schendful dep as herte can deuise  
 So falle vpon his body and his boones  
 The deuel I bykenne him al at oones 292

Allas to deere boughte sche hir beaute  
 wherfore I say þat alle men may se [leaf 183, back]  
 That 3iftes of fortune or of nature /  
 Ben cause of deth of many a creature / 296

hir beaute was hir dep I dar wel sayn  
 Allas so pitously as he was slayn  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.] 300

But trewely myn owne maister deere  
 This was a pitous tale for to heere  
 But napeles pas ouer þis is no fors  
 I pray to god to saue þi gentil corps 304

[ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 And euery boist ful of þi letuarie  
 God blesse hem and oure lady seinte marie / 308

So mot I þen þou art a propre man  
 And y-lik a prelat by seint Runyan  
 Sayde I wel can I not speke in terme  
 But wel I woot þou dost myn herte erme 312

I haue almost y-caught a cardiacle  
 By corpus boones but I haue triacle  
 Oper elles a draught of moyst and corny ale  
 Oper but/ I hiere anoon a mery tale 316



Myn hert is brost. for pite of þat mayde  
Thow pardonere þou belamy he sayde /  
Tel vs a tale for þou canst many oon  
It schal be doon quod he and þat anoon 320  
But first quod he her at þis ale stake /  
I wil first drynke and byt on a cake  
But right anoon þe gentils gan to crie  
Nay let him tellen vs no ribaudye 324  
Tel vs som moral þing þat we may leere /  
Gladly quod he and sayde as ȝe schal heere  
But in þe cuppe wil I me bepinke  
vpon some honest tale whil I drinke / 328

[*No break in the MS.*]

## ¶ Narrat

**L** Ordynge quod he in chirche whan I preche  
 I peyne me to haue an hauteyn speche /  
 And ryng' it out as lowd as dop a belle  
 For I can al by rote þat I telle 332  
 My teeme is alway oon and euer was  
 Radix omnium malorum est Cupiditas  
 First I pronounce whennes þat I come  
 And þanne my bulles schewe I alle and some [leaf 186] 336  
 Oure liege lordes seal vpon my patent  
 That schewe I first my body to warent/  
 That no man be so hardy prest ne clerk  
 Me to destourbe of cristes holy werk' 340  
 And after þat þan tel I forth my tales  
 Bulles of popes and of Cardynales /  
 Of patriarkes and of bisshops I schewe  
 And in latyn speke I wordes fewe / 344  
 To sauore with my predicacioun  
 And for to stere hem to deuocioun  
 Thanne schewe I forth my longe cristal stooness  
 I-crammed ful of cloutes and of boones 348  
 Reliks þay ben as wene þei echoon  
 Than haue I in latoun a schulder boon  
 which þat was of an holy Iewes scheep  
 Good men say I tak' of my wordes keep 352  
 If þat þis boon be waische in eny welle /  
 If cow or calf or scheep or oxe swelle  
 That eny worm hap ete or worm I-stonge  
 Tak' water of þat welle and waisch his tonge 356

And it is hool anoon and forþer-more  
 Of pokkes and of scabbe and euery sore /  
 Schal euery scheep be hool þat of þis welle  
 That drynketh a draught tak heed eek what I telle 360.  
 If þat þe goode man þat þe beest oweþ  
 wol euery wike er þat þe cok him croweþ  
 Fastynge drynke / of þis welle a draught  
 As þilke holy Iew oure eldres taught 364  
 His beestes and his stoor schal multiplie  
 And sires also it kelith Ialousie  
 For þough a man be ful in ialous rage  
 let make wip þis water his potage 368  
 And neuer schal he more his wyf mys trist  
 þough he þe soþ of hir defaute wist  
 Al hadde sche take prestes tuo or þre  
 her is a meteyn eek þat 3e may see 372  
 he þat his honde put in þis metayn  
 he schal haue multiplying of grayn [leaf 186, back]  
 whan he haþ sowen. be it whete or otes  
 So þat 3e offre pans or elles grootes 376  
 And men and wommen oon þing warne I 3ow  
 If eny wight be in þis chirche now  
 That haþ doon synne horrible þat he  
 Dar nought for schame of it schryuen be 380  
 Or ony womman be sche 3ong or old  
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold  
 which folk schal haue no power ne grace  
 To offre to my relikes in þis place 384  
 And who so fint him out of suche blame  
 Thay wol come vp and offre in goddes name  
 And I assoile hem by þe auctorite  
 which þat by bulle. was I-graunted me 388  
 By þis gaude haue I wonne euery 3eer  
 An hundred mark syn I was pardonere  
 I stonde lik a clerk in my pulpit  
 And whan þe lewed poeple is doun I-set 392

I preche so as ȝe haue herd bifore  
 And telle hem an hondred lapes more  
 Than peyne I me to strecche forþ my necke  
 And est and west vpon þe poeple I bekke 396  
 As doþ a dowfe syttyng' on a berne  
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so ȝerne  
 That' it is ioye to se my busynesse  
 Of auarice and of such cursednesse 400  
 Is al my preching' for to make hem fre  
 To ȝeue here pans and namely vnto me  
 For myn entent' is nought' but' for to wynne  
 And no þing' for correccioun of synne 404  
 I rekke neuer. when þay ben I-beryed  
 Though þat' here soules gone a blakeberyed  
 For certes many a predicacioun  
 Comeþ ofte tyme of euel entencioun 408  
 Som for plesauns of folk' and flaterie  
 To ben auaunced by ypocrisie  
 And som for veine gloir and som for hate  
 For whan I dar not' oþer weys debate [leaf 187] 412  
 Than wil I styng'e him with my tonge smerte  
 In preching' so þat he schal not' astert'  
 To be diffamed falsly if' þat' he  
 haþ trespass' to my breþeren or to me 416  
 For þough I telle not' his propre name  
 Men schal wel knowe þat it is þe same /  
 By signes and by oþer circumstaunces  
 Thus quyt' I folk' þat' doon vs displeaunces 420  
 Thus put' I out' my venym vnder hiewe  
 Of holynes. to seme holy and trewe /  
 But schortly myn entent I wol deuyse  
 I preche no þing' but' of coueityse 424  
 Therfor my teem is ȝit' and euer was  
 Radix omnium. malorum est Cupiditas  
 Thus can I preche agayn þe same vice  
 which þat' I vse and þat' is auarice 428

But though my self be gulty in þe synne  
 3it can I make oþer folk to twynne /  
 From auarice and soone to repent  
 But þat/ is not my principal entent 432  
 I preche no þing but for coueitise  
 Of þis matier it ought Inough suffise  
 Than telle I hem ensamples many oon  
 Of olde þinges longe tyme agoon 436  
 For lewed poeple louen tales olde  
 which þinges can þay wel report and holde /  
 what trowe 3e whiles I may preche  
 And wyne gold and siluer for I teche 440  
 That I wil lyue in pouert wilfully  
 Nay nay I þought it/ neuer trewly  
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes  
 I wil do no labour wip myn hondes 444  
 Ne make basketis and lyue þer by  
 By cause I wil nought begge ydelly  
 I wol noon of thapostles counterfete  
 I wol haue money . wolle chese and whete / 448  
 Al were it 3euen of þe prestes page  
 Or of þe porest wydow in a village [leaf 187, back]  
 And schold hir children sterue for famyn  
 Nay I wol drinke licour of þe wyn 452  
 And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun  
 But herknep lordynges my conclusioun  
 3oure likyng is . þat I schal telle a tale  
 Now haue I dronk a draught of corny ale / 456  
 By god I hope I schal telle 3ow a þing  
 That schal by resoun be at 3our liking  
 For þough myself be a ful vicious man  
 A moral tale 3it I 3ow telle can 460  
 which I am wont to preche for to wynn.  
 Now hold 3our pees my tale I wol byginne

[Partial break of one line in the MS.]

¶ Narrat

**I**N Flaundres whilom was a companye /  
 Of 3onge folkes þat haunted folye 464  
 As ryot hasard stywes and tauernes  
 wher as wip lutes harpes and gyternes  
 Thay daunce and play at dees bope day & night  
 And ete also and drynk ouer her might 468  
 Thurgh which þay doon þe deuyl sacrifice  
 wipinne þe deueles temple in cursed wise  
 By superfluite abhominable  
 her othes been so greet and so dampnable 472  
 That it is grisly for to hieere hem swere  
 Our blisful lordes body þay totere  
 hem þoughte Iewes rent him nouȝt y-nough  
 And ech of hem at operes synne lough 476  
 And right anon þer come tombesteris  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 Whiche þat ben verray þe deuales officeres 480  
 To kyndle and blowe þe fuyr of leccherie  
 þat is anexid vnto glotonye  
 The holy wryt take I to my witnesse ¶ nolite inebriare vino  
 That luxury is in wyn and dronkenesse 484  
 lo how þat dronken loth vnkyndely  
 lay by his doughtres tuo vnwityngly  
 So dronk he was he niste what he wrought  
 herodes who-so wel þe story sought 488  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no spurious lines in this MS.]

whan he of wyn was repleet at his fest [leaf 188]  
 Right at his oughne table ȝaf his hest  
 To sle þe baptist Iohn ful gilteles  
 Seneca seiþ a good word doutales 492  
 he seiþ he can no difference fynde  
 Bituyx a man þat is out of his mynde  
 And a man þe which is dronkelewe  
 But þat woodnes fallen in a schrewe 496  
 Perseuereth lenger þan doth dronkenesse  
 O glutonye ful of corsidnesse  
 O cause first of oure confusioun  
 O origial of oure dampnacioun 500  
 Til crist had bought out wip his blood agayn  
 lo how dere schortly for to sayn  
 Abought was first/ þis cursed felonye  
 Corupt was al þis world for glotonye 504  
 Adam our fader and his wyf also  
 Fro paradys to labour and to wo  
 were dryuen for þat vice it is no drede  
 For whils þat adam fasted as I rede 508  
 he was in paradis and whan þat he  
 Eet of þe fruyt defendit of a tre  
 he was out cast to wo and in-to peyne  
 O . glotony . wel ought vs on þe pleyne 512  
 O . wist a man how many maladyes  
 Folwith of excesse and of glotonyes  
 he wolde be þe more mesurable  
 Of his diete sittyng at his table 516  
 Allas þe schorte þrote þe tendre moup  
 Makeþ þat Est . West . north and south  
 In erþe in watir in ayer man to swynke  
 To gete a sely glotoun mete and drynke . 520  
 Of þis matier o poul wel canstow trete  
 Mete vnto wombe and wombe vnto mete  
 Schal god destroyen boþe as powel seiþ  
 Allas a foul þing is it by my faip 524

Quam diu ieiunauit adam  
 In paradyso fuit comedit  
 et electus est statim duxit  
 uxorem &c.

Esca ventris & venter  
 escit deus autem hunc  
 & illam destruet &c.

To say þis word / and fouler is þe dede  
 whan men so drynke / of þe whyt and rede Ad philipenses  
capitulo 3<sup>o</sup>  
 That of his þrote he makip his priue [leaf 188, back]  
 Thurgh þilke cursed superfluite 528  
 Thapostil wepyng saip ful pitously  
 Ther walkith many of which 3ou told haue I  
 I say it now wepyng wip pitous vois  
 Thay are enemys of cristes croys / 532  
 Of which þe ende is deth wombe is her god  
 O wombe / o bely . o stynkyng is þi cod  
 Fulild of dong / and of corrupcioun  
 At eyþer ende of þe foul is þe soun 536  
 how gret cost / and labour is þe to fynde /  
 These cokes how þey stamp and streyn and grynde /  
 And torne substaunce in to accident  
 To fulfille / þy licorous talent 540  
 Out of þe harde boones gete þay  
 The mary for þay caste nouzt away  
 That may go þurgh þe golet softe and soote  
 Of spicery and leuys bark and roote 544  
 Schal ben his sauce maad to his delyt/  
 To make him haue a newe appetit  
 But certes he þat haunteþ suche delices  
 Is deed þer whiles þat he lyueþ in vices 548  
 A licorous þing is wyn and dronkenesse  
 Is ful of stryuyng and of wrecchednesse  
 O dronke man disfigured is þi face  
 Sour is þi breþ foul artow to embrace 552  
 And þurgh þi dronkenesse sowneþ þe soun  
 As þough þou seydest ay Sampson Sampson  
 And 3it god wot sampson drank neuer wyn  
 Thou fallist as it were a stiked swyn 556  
 Thy tonge is lost and al þin honest cure  
 For dronkenes is verray sepulture  
 Of mannes witt and his discrecioun  
 In whom þat drynk haþ dominacioun 560



He can no counseil kepe it is no drede  
 Ne keep ȝow from þe white and from þe rede  
 Namely fro þe white wyn of leepe  
 That is to selle in Fleetstreet or in Chepe 564  
 This wyn of Spayne crepith subtilly [leaf 189]  
 In oper wyne growyng faste by  
 Of which þer riseth such fumosite /  
 That whan a man hath dronke draughtes þre / 568  
 And weneth þat he be at hom in Chepe  
 He is in Spayne right at þe toun of lepe /  
 Nought at þe Rochel ne at Burdeaux toun  
 And þanne wol þai say Sampson Sampson . 572  
 But herken lordyngs o word I ȝou pray /  
 That alle þe souerayn actes dar I say  
 Of victories in þe olde testament  
 That þorugh þe verray god omnipotent 576  
 were doon in abstinence and in prayere /  
 Lokith þe bible and þer ȝe may it hiere  
 Loke atthila þe grete conquerour  
 Deyd in his sleep with schame and dishonour 580  
 Bleedyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse /  
 A captayn schuld ay lyue in sobrenesse  
 And ouer al this aryse ȝow right wel  
 what was comaunded vnto lamuel 584  
 Nought samuel but lamuel say I  
 Redith þe bible and fyndep expresly  
 Of wyn ȝeuyng / to hem þat han Iustice  
 No more of þis for it may wel suffice 588  
 And now I haue I-spoke of glotonye /  
 Now wil I ȝow defende hasardrye  
 ¶ Hasard is verray moder of lesynges  
 And of deceipt of cursed forsweringes 592  
 Blaspheme of crist manslaught and wast also /  
 Of catel and of tyme . forther mo .  
 It is reproef and contrair to honour  
 For to be halde a comun hasardour 596

And euer þe heyer he is of astaaf  
 The more is he holden desolaaf  
 If þat a prince vse hasardrie  
 In alle gouernance and policie 600  
 He is as by comun opinioun  
 Holde þe lasse in reputacioun  
 Stilbon þat was I-holde a wis embasitour [leaf 180, back]  
 was sent in to Corinthe with gret honour 604  
 Fro lacidome to make hir alliaunce  
 And whan him cam him happede par chaunce /  
 That alle þe grettest þat were of þat lond /  
 Playng atte hasard he hem fond 608  
 For which as soone as it mighte be  
 He stal him hoom azein to his contre  
 And saide ther I nyl nouȝt lese my name  
 I nyl not take on me so gret diffame 612  
 ȝow for to allie vnto noon hasardoures /  
 Sendeth operwise embasitoures  
 For by my troupe me were leuer dye  
 Than I ȝow scholde / to hasardours allye / 616  
 For ȝe þat ben so glorious in honoures  
 Schal not allie ȝow with hasardoures  
 As by my wil / ne as by my trete  
 This wise philosophre þus sayd he 620  
 lo eek þat þe king Demetrius  
 The king of Parthes as þe saith vs  
 Sent him a paire dees of gold in scorn  
 For he had vsed tauern þer toforn 624  
 For which he hield his gloir and his renoun  
 At no valieu or reputacioun  
 Lordes may fynde oper maner play  
 Honest ynough to dryue away þe day 628  
 Now wol I speke of opes fals and grete /  
 A word or tuo as oper bookes entrete  
 Gret swering is a þing abhominable  
 And fals swering is more reprouable 632

The hyhe god forbad sweryng' at' al /  
 witnes on Mathew but' in special  
 Of sweryng' saith þe holy Ieremye  
 Thou schalt' say soth þin opes and not' lye 636  
 And swere in doom and eek' in rightwisnes  
 But' ydel sweryng' is a cursednes  
 Bihold and se þer in þe firste table  
 Of hihe goddes heste honorable / 640  
 How þat' þe secounde heste is this [leaf 190]  
 Tak' not' in ydel ne his name amys  
 Lo he rather forbedith such sweryng'  
 Than homicide or many a corsed þing' 644  
 I say as by order þus it stondith  
 This knoweth he þat' þe hestes vnderstondeth  
 how þat' þe second hest' of god is that  
 And forþermore I wol þe telle a plat' 648  
 The vegance schal not' parte fro his hous  
 That' of his othes is outrageous  
 By goddes precious hert' and by his nayles  
 And by þe blood of crist' þat' is in hayles 652  
 Seuen is my chaunce and also cink' and tray  
 By goddis armes and þou falsly play  
 This daggere schal þurgh þin herte goo  
 This fruyt' cometh of þe bicchid boones tuo 656  
 Forswering' Ire / falsnes homicide /  
 Now for þe loue of crist' þat' for vs dyde  
 leueth þoure othis boþe gret' and smale  
 But sires now wol I telle forþ my tale 660  
 These riottours þre / of which I þou telle  
 longe erst' þan prime rong' eny belle  
 were set' hem in a tauern for to drynke  
 And as þay sat' þay herd a belle clinke 664  
 Biforn a corps was caried to þe graue  
 That' oon of hem gan calle vnto his knaue  
 Go bet' quop he and axe redily  
 what' corps is þat passeth her forþ by 668

And loke þou report his name wel  
 Sire quod he but þat nedep neuer a del  
 It was me told er ȝe com heer tuo houres  
 He was *par* dy an old felaw of ȝoures 672  
 And sodeinly he was I-slayn to night  
 Fordronk as he sat on his bench vpright  
 Ther com a priue thef men clepen deth  
 That in þis contre al þe peple sleth 676  
 And with his spere he smot his hert a tuo  
 And went his way wipoute wordes mo  
 he hap a þousand slayn þis pestilence [leaf 190, back]  
 And maister er ȝe come in his presence / 680  
 Me pinkep þat it is ful necessarie /  
 For to be war of such an aduersarie  
 Beþ redy for to meete him euermore  
 Thus taughte me my dame I say nomore 684  
 By seinte mary sayde þe tauerner  
 The child saiþ soþ for he hap slayn þis ȝeer  
 Hens ouer a myle wipinne a gret village  
 Boþe man and womman. child and page 688  
 I trowe his habitacioun be þere  
 To ben auysed gret wisdom it were  
 Er þat he dede a man þat dishonour  
 ȝe goddis armes quod þis ryottour 692  
 Is it such peril with him for to meete /  
 I schal him seeke by way and eek by strete  
 I make avow to goddis digne boones  
 Herkneþ felaws we þre ben al oones 696  
 let ech of vs hold vp his hond to other  
 And ech of vs bycome operes broþer  
 And we wil slee þis false traitour deth  
 He schal be slayne/ that so many sleeth 700  
 By goddis dignete er it be night  
 Togideres han þese þre here trouþes plight  
 To lyue and deye ech of he wip oper  
 As þough he were his oughne sworne broþer 704

And vp þai startyn al dronke in þis rage /  
 And forþ þai goon towardes þat village  
 Of which þe tauerner haþ spoke biforn  
 And many a grisly oth þan han þay sworn 708  
 And cistes blessed body þay torent  
 Deth schal be deed if þat þay may him hent  
 Right as þay wolde haue torned ouer a style  
 whan þai han goon nought fully a myle 712  
 An old man and a pore with hem mette  
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette /  
 And saide þus lordynges god 3ow se  
 The proudest of þe ryotoures þre 716  
 Answerd aȝein .- what carle wiþ meschaunce<sup>1</sup> [leaf 191]  
 why artow al forwrapped saue þi face <sup>[<sup>1</sup> A blank line is in MS  
after l. 717 and 718.]</sup>  
 whi lyuest þou in so gret an age  
 This olde man gan loke on his visage 720  
 And saide þus for þat I can not fynde /  
 A man þough þat I walke in to Inde  
 Neiper in Cite noon ne in village  
 That wol chaunge his ȝouþe for myn age 724  
 And þerfore moot I haue myn age stille /  
 As longe tyme as it is goddes wille  
 And deth allas ne wil not haue my lif  
 Thus walk I lik a resteles caytif 728  
 And on þe ground which is my modres gate  
 I knokke with my staf erly and late  
 And saye leue moder let me In  
 Lo how I wane fleisch . and blood and skyn 732  
 Allas whan schuln my boones ben at rest  
 Moder with ȝow wil I chaunge my chest/  
 That in my chamber . longe tyme haþ be  
 ȝe for an haire clout/ to wrap in me 736  
 But ȝet to me sche wil not do þat grace  
 For which ful pale and welkid is my face  
 But sires to ȝow . it is no curtesye  
 To speke vnto an old man vilonye 740

But he trespas in word or elles dede  
 In holy writ 3e may 3our self wel rede  
 Azens an old man hoor vpon his hede  
 3e schold arise wherefor I 3ow rede / 744  
 Ne doth vnto an old man more harm now  
 Na more þan 3e wolde men dede to 3ow:  
 In age. if þat 3e may so long abyde  
 And god be with 3ou / wher so 3e go or ryde 748  
 I moot go þider as I haue to goo  
 Nay olde cherl by god thou schalt not so  
 Sayde þat oper hasardour anoon  
 Thou partist nouȝt so lightly by seint Iohn 752  
 Thou spak right now of þat traytour dep [leaf 191, back]  
 That in þis contre alle oure frendes slep  
 Haue her my trouth as þou art his aspye /  
 Tel wher he is or elles þou schalt dye / 756  
 By god and by þat holy sacrament/  
 For soþly þou art oon of his assent  
 To schewe vs 3onge folk þe false theef  
 Now sires þan if þat 3ow be so leef 760  
 To fynde dep torn vp þis croked way  
 For in þat groue I laft him by my fay  
 Vnder a tree and þer he wil abyde  
 Ne for 3our bost he nyl him no þing hyde 764  
 Se 3e þat ook right þer 3e schuln him fynde  
 God saue 3ow þat bought aȝein mankynde  
 And 3ow amend þus sayde þis olde man  
 And euerich of þese riotoures ran 768  
 Til þay come to the tre and ther þay founde  
 Of florins fyn of gold y-coyned rounde  
 wel neygh a seuen bussshels as me thought  
 No lenger þanne after dep þay sought 772  
 But ech of hem so glad was of þat sight  
 For þat þe florens so faire were and bright  
 That doun þai sette hem by þat precious hord  
 The 3ongest of hem spak / þe firste word 776

Breperen takeþ keep what I schal say  
 My witte is gret þough þat I bourde and play  
 This tresour hap fortune to vs. 3iuen  
 In mirth and iolyte our lif to lyuen 780  
 And lightly as it comth so wil we spende  
 Ey goddis precious dignite who wende  
 To day þat we schuld haue so fair a grace  
 But might þis gold be caried fro þis place 784  
 Hom to myn hous or ellis vnto 3oures  
 For wel I wot þat þis gold is nou3t oures  
 Than were we. in heyh felicite  
 But trewely by day it may not be 788  
 Men wolde say þat we were þeues stronge /  
 And for oure tresour doon vs for to honge  
 This tresour moste caried be by night [leaf 192]  
 As wysly and as slely as it might 792  
 wherfore I rede þat cut among vs alle  
 Be drawe and let se wher þe cut wil falle  
 He þat hap þe cut wip herte bliþe/  
 Schal renne to þe toun and þat ful swithe 796  
 To bring vs bred and wyn ful priuely  
 And tuo of vs schal kepe subtilly  
 This tresour wel and if he wil not tarie  
 whan it is night we wol þis tresour carie 800  
 By oon assent þer as vs likeþ best/  
 That oon of hem þe cut/ brought in his fest/  
 And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle  
 And it fel on þe 3ongest of hem alle / 804  
 And forþ toward þe toun he went anoon  
 And al so soone as he was agoon  
 That oon of hem. spak vnto þat oper  
 Thow wost/ wel þat þou art my sworne broþer 808  
 Thy profyt wol I. telle þe anoon  
 Thow wost wel þat our felaw is a-goon  
 And her is gold and þat ful gret plente  
 That schal departed be among vs þre / 812

But napeles if I can schape it so  
 That it departed were bitwix vs tuo  
 had I not doon a frendes torn to þe /  
 That oper answerd I not how þat may be/ 816  
 he wot wel þat þe gold is wip vs tway  
 what schulde we þan do what schuld we say  
 Schal it be counsail sayde þe ferste schrewe  
 And I schal telle þe in wordes fewe / 820  
 what we schul doon and bringe it wel aboute  
 I graunte quod þat other wipoute doute  
 That by my troupe I wil þe nought bywray  
 Now quod þe first þou wost wel we ben tway 824  
 And two of vs schuln strengener be þan oon  
 lok whanne he is sett and þat anoon  
 Arys as þou woldest with him pleye  
 And I schal ryf him thurgh þe sydes tweye 828  
 whils þou strogelest wip him as in game [leaf 192, back]  
 And with þi dagger loke þou do þe same  
 And þan schal al þe gold departed be  
 My dere frend bitwixe þe and me 832  
 Than may we oure lustes fulfille  
 And play at dees right at our owne wille  
 And þus accorded ben þese schrewes twayn  
 To sle þe þridde . as 3e herd me sayn 836  
 This 3ongest/ which þat wente to þe toun  
 Ful fast in hert/ he rollith vp and doun  
 The Beaute of þe florins newe and bright  
 O lord quod he if so were þat I might 840  
 Haue al þis gold vnto my self alloone  
 Ther is no man þat lyueth vnder þe troone  
 Of gold þat schulde lyue so mery as I  
 And atte last þe feend oure enemy 844  
 Put in his þought þat he schuld poyson beye  
 wip which he mighte sle his felaws tweye  
 For-why þe feend fond him in such lyuyng  
 That he had leue to sorwe him to brynge 848



For þis witterly . was his entent  
 To slen hem boþe and neuer to repent/  
 And forth he goþ no lenger wold he tary  
 In to þe toun vnto a potecary / 852  
 And prayde him þat he him wolde selle  
 Som poyoun þat he might his rattis quelle  
 And eek þer was a polkat in his hawe /  
 As he sayde his capouns had I-slawe / 856  
 And said he wold him wreke if þat he might  
 On vermyn þat destroyed him by night  
 Thapotecary answerd and þou schalt haue  
 A þing þat also god my soule saue 860  
 In al þis world þer nys no creature  
 That ete or dronk had of þis confecture  
 Nought but þe mountaunce of a corn of whete  
 That he ne schuld his lif anoon forlete / 864  
 3e sterue he schal and þat in lasse while  
 Than þou wilt goon a paas not but a myle /  
 The poyoun is so strong and violent [leaf 193]  
 This cursed man hap in his hond I-hent 868  
 This poyoun in a box & sins he ran  
 In to þe nexte stret vnto a man  
 And borwed him large botels þre  
 And in þe two his poyoun poured he 872  
 The þrid he keped clene for his drynke  
 For al þe night he schop him for to swynke  
 In caryng the gold out of þat place  
 And whan þis riotour with sory grace 876  
 had fillid with wyn his botels þre  
 To his felaws aȝein repaireth he  
 what nedith it to sermoun it more  
 For right as þay had cast/ his deth bifore 880  
 Right so þay han him slayn and þat anoon  
 And whan þis was I-doon þan spak þat oon  
 Now let vs drynk and sitte and make vs mery  
 And sippen we wil his body bery 884

And afterward it happed hem par cas  
 To take þe botel þer þe poyoun was  
 And drank and ȝaf his felaw drink also  
 For which þay sterued boþe tuo 888  
 But certes I suppose þat amycen  
 wrot neuer in Canoun ne in non fen  
 Mo wonder sorwes of empoisonyng  
 Thus hadde þese wrecches tuo here endyng 892  
 Thus endid been þese homicides tuo  
 And eek þe fals empoysoner also /  
 O cursed synne ful of cursednesse  
 O traytorous homicidy o wikkednesse 896  
 O glotony luxurie and hasardrye /  
 Thou blasphemour of crist with vilanye  
 And oþes grete of vsage and of pride  
 Allas mankynde how may it bytyde 900  
 Ther to þy creatour which þat þe wrought  
 And wip his precious herte blood þe bought  
 Thou art so fals and so vnkynde allas  
 Now good men god forȝeue ȝow ȝour trespas 904  
 And ware ȝow fro þe synne of auarice [leaf 193, back]  
 Myn holy pardoun may ȝou alle warice  
 So þat ȝe offren noblis or starlinges  
 Or elles siluer spones broches or rynges 908  
 Bowip ȝour hedes vnder þis holy bulle  
 Comeþ forþ ȝe wyues and offreþ ȝour wolle  
 ȝour names I entre her in my rolle anon  
 In to þe blis of heuen schul ȝe goon 912  
 I ȝow assoile by myn heyh power  
 If ȝe woln offre as clene and eek als cler  
 As ȝe were born . and sires lo þus I preche /  
 And Ihū crist þat is onre soules leche 916  
 So graunte ȝow his pardoun to receyue  
 For þat is best . I wil not ȝow disceyue  
 But sires o word forȝat I in my tale /  
 I haue relikes and pardoun in my male / 920

As fair as eny man in Engeland  
 which were me I-zeue by popes hond  
 If eny of 3ow wol of deuocioun  
 Offren and haue myn absolucioun 924  
 Cometh forth anon knelith her a-doun  
 And 3e schul haue here my pardoun  
 Or elles takith pardoun as 3e wende  
 Al newe and freissch at euery townes ende 928  
 So þat 3e offren alway new and newe /  
 Nobles and pens which þat ben good and trewe /  
 It is an honour to euery þat is heer  
 That may haue a suffisaunt pardoner 932  
 Tassoile 3ow in contre as 3e ryde  
 For auentures which þat may bytyde  
 For paraunter þer may falle oon or tuo  
 Doun of his hors and breke his nekke a-tuo 936  
 luke such a seurete is to 3ou alle  
 That I am in 3our felaschip I-falle  
 That may assoyle 3ou boþe more and lasse  
 whan þat þe soule schal fro þe body passe 940  
 I rede þat oure hoste schal bygynne  
 For he is most enuolipid in synne  
 Com forþ sire ost and offer first anoon [leaf 194]  
 And þou schalt kisse þe reliquis euerichoon 944  
 3e for a grote vnboele þi purs  
 Nay nay quod he þan haue I cristes curs  
 let be quod he it schal not be so theech  
 Thou woldest make me kisse þin olde breech 948  
 And swere it were a relik of a seynt  
 Though it were wiþ þi fundament depeynt  
 But by þe cros which þat seynt heleyne fond  
 I wold I had þy coyloons in myn hond 952  
 In stede of reliks or of seintuary /  
 let cut hem of I wol help hem to cary  
 Thay schul be schryned in an hogges tord  
 This pardoner answerde nat o word 956

So wroþ he was he wolde no word say  
Now quod oure host I wol no lenger play  
wiþ þe ne with noon oþer angry man  
But right anon þis worthy knight bygan 960  
whan þat he saugh þat al þe peple lough  
No more of þis for it is right ynough  
Sir pardoner be glad and mery of cheere  
And 3e sir host þat ben to me so deere 964  
I pray 3ow þat 3e kisse þe pardoner  
And pardoner I pray 3ow draweþ 3ow ner  
And as we dede let vs laugh and play  
Anoon þay kisse and riden forþ her way / 968  
¶ Here endeth þe pardoneres tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

## GROUP B. (β. FRAGMENT IIL)

### § 4. THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

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¶ Here bygynneth þe Schipman his tale/

**A** Marchaunt' whilom dwelled at' seint Denys  
 That' riche was for which men hild him wys  
 A wyf' he had of excellent' beaute  
 And companable and reuerent' was sche  
 which is a þing' þat causeth more despence  
 Than worth is al þe cher and reuerence 1196  
 That' men doon hem at' festes or at daunces  
 Such salutaciouns and continuaunces  
 Passeth as doþ þe schadow on a wal  
 But' wo is him þat' paye moot' for al 1200  
 The sely housbond algaþ' moste pay [leaf 194, back]  
 He most' vs cloþe . in ful good array  
 Al for his oughne worschip richely  
 In which array we daunce iolily 1204  
 And if' þat' he may not' parauenture  
 Or elles wil not/ such dispens endure  
 But' þynkep it is wasted and I-lost'  
 Than moot' anoþer paye for oure cost' 1208  
 Or lene vs gold and þat' is perilous  
 The worþy marchaunt' huld a noble hous/  
 For which he hadde alday gret' repair  
 For his largesce and for his wyf' was fair 1212  
 what' wonder is but herkneþ to my tale  
 Amonges al þese gestes gret' and smale /  
 Ther was a monk' a fair man and a bold  
 I trowe þritty wynter he was old 1216  
 That' euer in oon was drawyng' to þat place /  
 This 3onge monk' þat' was so fair of face

Aqueynted was so wip þe goode man  
 Sip þat her firste knowleche bygan 1220  
 That in his hous as familier was he /  
 As it possibil is a frend to be  
 And for as mochil as þis goode man  
 And eek þis monk of which þat I bygan 1224  
 were boþe tuo I-born in oon village /  
 The monk him claymeth as for cosynage  
 And he aȝein he saith nat oones nay  
 But was as glad þer of as foul of day 1228  
 For to his hert it was a gret plesaunce /  
 Thus ben þay knyȝt wip eterne alliaunce  
 And ilk of hem gan oper to assure /  
 Of broþerhed whil þat her lif may dure 1232  
 Fre was daun Iohn and manly of despence /  
 As in þat hous and ful of diligence  
 To do plesaunce and also gret costage  
 He nought forȝat to ȝeue þe leste page 1236  
 In al þat hous but after her degre /  
 He ȝaf þe lord and sippen þe meyne /  
 whan þat he com som maner honest þing [70a/195]  
 For which þay were as glad of his comyng 1240  
 As foul is fayn. whan þat þe sonne vpriseþ  
 No mor of þis as now for it suffiseþ  
 But so bifel þis marchaunt on a day /  
 Schop him to make redy his array 1244  
 Toward þe toun of Bruges for to fare /  
 To byen þer a porcioun of ware  
 For which he hath to paris sent anon  
 A messenger and prayed had dan Iohn 1248  
 That he schuld come to seint Denys and play  
 with him and wip his wyf a day or tway  
 Er he to brigges went. in alle wise  
 This nobil monk/ of which I ȝow deuyse 1252  
 Hap of his abbot as him list licence  
 By cause he was a man of heih prudence.

And eek' an officer out/ for to ryde /  
 To se her graunges and her bernys wyde / 1256  
 And vnto seint denys he comeþ anoon  
 who was so welcome as my lord dan Iohn  
 Oure deere cosyn ful of curtesie /  
 with him brought' he a Iubbe of maluesie 1260  
 And eek/ anoper ful of wyn vernage  
 And volantyn as ay was his vsage  
 And þus I lete hem ete and drynk' and play  
 This marchaunt' and þis monk' a day or tway 1264  
 The þridde day þis marchaund vp he riseth  
 And on his needes sadly him auyseth  
 And vp in to his countour hous goþ he  
 To rekyn wip himself' as wel may be / 1268  
 Of þilke ȝer how þat' it with him stood  
 And how þat' he dispended had his good  
 And if' þat' he encresced were or noon  
 His bookes and his bagges many oon 1272  
 He hap byforn him on his counter bord  
 For riche was his tresor and his hord  
 For which ful fast' his countour dore he schette  
 And eek' he wolde no man schold him lette 1276  
 Of his accomptes for þe mene tyme / [leaf 126, back]  
 And þus he sat' til it was passed prime  
 Dan Iohn was risen in þe morn also  
 And in the gardyn walkith to and fro 1280  
 And hap his þinges said ful curteisly  
 This good wyf' com walkyng' ful priuely  
 In to a gardyn þer he walkeþ softe  
 And him salueþ as sche hap doon ful ofte 1284  
 A mayde child com in hir compaignie  
 which as hir list' sche may gouerne and gye  
 For ȝit' vnder þe ȝerde was þe mayde  
 O dere cosyn myn dan Iohn sche sayde 1288  
 what' ayleþ ȝow so rape to arise  
 Nece quod he it aught' ynough suffise

Fyue houres for to slepe a night  
 But it were for eny old palled wight 1292  
 As ben þese weddid men þat lye and dare  
 As in a forme lip a wery hare  
 were al forstraught with houndes gret and smale  
 But dere nece why be ȝe so pale / 1296  
 I trowe certis þat oure goode man  
 hath on ȝow laborid sith þe night bygan  
 That ȝow were nede to resten hastiliche  
 And with þat word he lowgh ful meriliche 1300  
 And of his owne þought he was al reed  
 This faire wyf bygan to schake hir heed  
 And sayde þus ȝe god wot al quod sche /  
 Nay cosyn myn it stant not so wip me 1304  
 For by þat god þat ȝaf me soule and lif  
 In al þe reme of Fraunce is þer no wif  
 That lasse lust hap to þat sory play  
 For I may synge / alas and waylaway 1308  
 That I was born but to no wight quod sche  
 Dar I not telle how it stont wip me  
 Wherfor I þink out of þis lond to wende  
 Or elles of my self to make an ende 1312  
 So ful am I of drede and eek of care  
 This monk bygan vpon þis wif to stare  
 And sayd alas my nece god forbede [leaf 196]  
 That ȝe for eny sorw or eny drede / 1316  
 Fordo ȝour self but telleþ me ȝour greef  
 Paraventure I may in ȝoure mescheef  
 Councel or help and þerfor telleþ me  
 Al ȝour annoy for it schal be secre 1320  
 For on my portos I make an oth  
 That neuer in my lif for lief ne loþ  
 Schal I of no counseil ȝou bywray  
 The same aȝein quod sche to ȝow I say 1324  
 By god and by þis portos wil I swere  
 Though men me wolde al in peces tere



Ne schal I neuer for to go to helle /  
 Bywreye word. of þing' þat' 3e me telle 1328  
 Not' for no cosynage ne alliaunce  
 But' verrayly for loue and affiaunce  
 Thus ben þay sworn and her-vpon I-kist'  
 And ilk' of hem told oper what' hem list' 1332  
 Cosyn quod sche if' þat' I had a space /  
 As I haue noon and namly in þis place  
 Then wold I telle a legend of' my lyf'  
 what' I haue suffred siþ I was a wyf' 1336  
 wiþ myn housbond þough he be 3our cosyn  
 Nay quod þis monk' by god and seint martyn  
 He is no more cosyn vnto me  
 Than is þis leef' þat' hongep on þe tre 1340  
 I clepid him so by seint' Denis of' Fraunce  
 To haue þe more cause of' acqueyntaunce  
 Of' 3ow which I haue loued specially  
 Abouen alle wommen sikerly 1344  
 This swere I 3ow on my professioun  
 Tellith 3oure greef' lest' þat' he come a doun  
 And hasteth 3ow and goþ 3our way anoon  
 My deere loue quod sche. O dan Iohn 1348  
 Ful leef' me were þis counseil to hyde  
 But' out' it moot' it may no more abyde  
 Myn housbond is to me þe worste man  
 That' euer was sippe þe world bigan 1352  
 But siþ I am a wif' it sit nought' me [leaf 196, back]  
 To telle eny wight of' oure priuete  
 [. . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 God schilde I scholde telle it for his grace / 1356  
 A wyf' ne schal not' say of' hir housbonde  
 But' al honour as I can vnderstonde  
 Saue vnto 3ow þus moche telle I schal  
 As help me god he is not' worþ at' al 1360  
 In no degre þe valieu of' a flie  
 But' 3it' me greueth most' his nigardye

And wel 3e wot' þat' wymmen naturelly	
Desiren sixe þinges as wel as I	1364
They wolde þat' here housbondes scholde be	
hardy and wys and riche and fre /	
And buxom to his wyf' and freisch on bedde	
But' by þe lord þat' for vs alle bledde	1368
For his honour my seluen to array	
A sonday next' comyng' 3it' most' I pay	
An hundred frank' or elles I am lorn	
3it' were me leuer þat' I were vnborn	1372
Than me were doon a sclaunder or vilenye .	
And if' myn housbond eek' might' it espie	
I ner but lost' and þerfor I 3ow pray	
[ . . . . .	1376
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . . no gap in the MS.]	
For a certein day I wol 3ow pay	1380
And do to 3ow what' pleasaunce and seruise	
That' I may do right' as 3ou list deuyse	
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce	
As foul as hadde Geneloun of Fraunce	1384
This gentil monk' answard in þis manere	
Now trewely myn owne lady deere /	
I haue on 3ow so gret' pite and reuthe /	
That I 3ow swere and plichte 3ow my treuþe	1388
That' whan 3our housbond is to Flaundres fare	
I schal deliuer 3ow out' of' 3oure care	
For I wol bringe 3ow an hundred frankes /	
And with þat' word he caught' hir by þe schankes	1392
And hir embraced hard and kist' hir ofte	
Goth now 3our way quod he al stille and softe /	
And let' vs dyne as sone as 3e may	
For by my chilindre it is prime of' day	[leaf 127] 1396
Goth now and beth as trew as I schal be /	
Now elles god forbede sire quod sche /	

And forþ sche goth as ioly as a pye /  
 And bad þe cookes þat þai schold hem hye / 1400  
 So þat men myghte dyne and þat anoon  
 vp to hir housbond þis wif is goon  
 And knockeþ at / his dore boldely  
 Qy la quod he . peter it am I 1404  
 Quod sche how longe sire wol 3e fast  
 how longe tyme wol 3e reken and cast  
 3our sommes and 3our bokes and 3our þinges /  
 The deuel haue part of alle such rekenynges 1408  
 3e haue I-nough par dy of goddes sonde /  
 Com down to day and let 3our bagges stonde  
 Ne be 3e not aschamed that Daun Iohn  
 Schal al day fastyng þus elenge goon 1412  
 what let vs hiere masse and gowe dyne  
 wif quod þis man litel canstow diuine  
 The curious besynesse þat we haue  
 For of vs chapmen so god me saue 1416  
 And by þat lord that cleped is seint Iue  
 Scarsly among twelue two schuln priue  
 Continuely lastyng in to her age  
 we may wel make cheer and good visage 1420  
 And dryue forth þe world as it may be  
 And kepen our estat in priuete  
 Til we be deed or elles þat we play  
 A pilgrimage or goon out of þe way 1424  
 And þerfor haue I / gret necessite  
 Vpon þis queynte world to auyse me  
 For euermor we moste stond in drede  
 Of hap and fortun / in our chapmanhele 1428  
 To Flaundres to morw at day  
 And come agayn as soone as I may  
 For which my deere wif I þe byseeke  
 And be to euery wight buxom and meeke 1432  
 And for to kepe oure good be curious  
 And honestly gouerne wel our hous

[leaf 197, back]

Thou hast ynough in euery maner wise  
 That to a thrifty housbond may suffice 1436  
 The lakkeþ noon array ne no vitaile  
 Of siluer in þy purs þou mayst not faile  
 And with þat word his contour dore he schitte  
 And doun he goþ no lenger wold he lette 1440  
 And hastily a masse was þer sayd  
 And spedily þe tables were I-layd  
 And to þe dyner faste þay hem spedde /  
 And rychely þis Chapman þe monk fedde / 1444  
 And after dyner daun Iohn sobrelly  
 This chapman took on part and priuely /  
 Sayd him þus. cosyn it stondeth so  
 That wel I se to brigges wol 3e go / 1448  
 God and seint austyn spede 3ou and gyde /  
 I pray 3ow cosyn wisly þat 3e ryde  
 Gouverneth 3ow also of 3our diete  
 Al temperelly and namely in þis hete 1452  
 Bitwix vs tuo nedeth no straunge fare  
 Far wel cosyn. god schilde 3ou fro care  
 If eny þing þer be by day or night  
 If it lay in my power and my might 1456  
 That 3e wil me comaunde in eny wise  
 It schal be doon right as 3e wol deuyse /  
 O thing er þat 3e goon if it might be /  
 I wolde pray 3ow for to lene me 1460  
 An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye  
 For certeyn bestis þat I moste beye /  
 To store with a place þat is oures  
 God help me so I wolde it were 3oures 1464  
 I schal not faile seurly of my day  
 Nought for a þousand frankes a myle way  
 But let þis þing be secre I 3ow pray /  
 For for þe bestis þis night most I pay 1468  
 And fare now wel myn owne cosyn deere  
 Graunt mercy of 3our cost and of 3our cheere

This noble marchaunt<sup>t</sup> gentilly anoon  
 Answerd and sayde. O cosyn daun Iohn<sup>n</sup> [leaf 198] 1472  
 Now sikerly þis is a smal request<sup>t</sup>  
 My gold is þoures whanne þat<sup>t</sup> þow lest/  
 And nought<sup>t</sup> oonly gold but<sup>t</sup> my chaffare /  
 Tak<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> þow liste / god schilde þe spare 1476  
 But<sup>t</sup> oon þing<sup>t</sup> is þe know it<sup>t</sup> wel ynough<sup>n</sup>  
 Of chapmen þat<sup>t</sup> her money is here plough<sup>n</sup>  
 we may creaunce whils we haue a name  
 But<sup>t</sup> goldles for to be it is no game 1480  
 Pay it agayn whan it liþ in þour ese /  
 After my might<sup>t</sup> ful fayn wold I þow plese /  
 This hundred frankes he fet<sup>t</sup> forth anoon  
 And priuely he took<sup>t</sup> hem to daun Iohn<sup>n</sup> 1484  
 No wight<sup>t</sup> in al þis world wist<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> þis loone  
 Sauyng<sup>t</sup> þe marchaund and dan Iohn<sup>n</sup> alloone  
 Thay drynke & speke and rome a while and play  
 Til þat<sup>t</sup> dan Iohn<sup>n</sup> rydeþ to his abbay 1488  
 The morwe cam and forth þe marchaund rideth  
 To Flaundres-ward his prentis wel him gydeth  
 Til þat<sup>t</sup> he cam to Brigges merily  
 Now goth þis marchaund faste and busily 1492  
 Aboute his neede and bieth and creaunceth  
 He neither pleyeth atte dys ne daunceþ  
 But<sup>t</sup> as a marchaund schortly for to telle  
 he lad his lyf<sup>t</sup> / and þer I let<sup>t</sup> him duelle 1496  
 The sonday next<sup>t</sup> þe marchaund is agoon  
 To seint<sup>t</sup> denys I-come is daun Iohn<sup>n</sup>  
 with croune and berd al freisch and newe I-schaue  
 In al þe hous þer nas so litel a knaue 1500  
 Ne no wight<sup>t</sup> elles þat<sup>t</sup> he nas ful fayn  
 For þat<sup>t</sup> my lord dan Iohn<sup>n</sup> was come agayn<sup>n</sup>  
 And schortly to þe poynte for to gon  
 This faire wif<sup>t</sup> acordith with dan Iohn<sup>n</sup> 1504  
 That<sup>t</sup> for þese hundred frank<sup>t</sup> he schuld al night<sup>t</sup>  
 Haue hir in his armes bolt/ vpright<sup>t</sup>

And þis acord parformed was in dede /  
 In mirth al night a bisy lif þay lede / 1508  
 Til it was day þat dan Iohn went his way  
 And bad þe meigne far wel haue good day [leaf 129, back]  
 For noon of hem ne no wight in þe toun  
 Hath of dan Iohn right noon suspeccioun 1512  
 And forth he rideth hom to his abbay  
 Or wher him list / no more of him I say /  
 ¶ This marchaund whan þat endid was þe faire  
 To seynt denys . he gan to repeire / 1516  
 And with his wif he makeþ fest and cheere  
 And tellith hir þat chaffar is so deere  
 That needes most he make a cheuisaunce  
 For he was bounde in a reconisaunce 1520  
 To paye twenty þousand scheldes anoon  
 For which þis marchaund is to paris goon  
 To borwe of certeyn frendes þat he hadde /  
 A certein frankes and some with him he ladde / 1524  
 And whan þat he was come in to þe toun  
 For gret chiertee and gret affeccioun  
 Vnto Dan Iohn he first goth him to play  
 Nought for to borwe of him no kyn monay 1528  
 But for to wite and se of his wel fare  
 And for to telle him of his chaffare  
 As frendes doon whan þay ben met in fere  
 Dan Iohn him maketh fest and mery cheere 1532  
 And he him told agayn ful specially  
 How he had bought right wel and graciously  
 Thanked be god / al his marchaundise  
 Saue þat he most in alle maner wise / 1536  
 Maken a cheuyssauns as for his best  
 And þan he schulde be in ioie and rest  
 Dan Iohn answerde certis I am fayn  
 That ȝe in hele are comen hom agayn 1540  
 And if þat I were riche as haue I blisse  
 Of twenty þousand scheld schuld ȝe not mysse

For 3e so kyndely þis oþer day  
 lente me gold and as I can and may 1544  
 I þanke 3ow by god and by seint Iame /  
 But napeles I took it to oure dame  
 3oure wif þe same gold azein  
 vpon 3our bench. sche wot it wel certeyn [leaf 199] 1548  
 By certein toknes þat I can hir telle  
 Now by 3our leue I may no longer duelle  
 Oure abbot wol out of toun anon  
 And in his compaignye moot I goon 1552  
 Grete wel oure dame my nece swete  
 And far wel dere cosyn til þat we meete  
 This marchaznd which þat was boþe war and wys /  
 Creaunced hap and payed eek in parys/ 1556  
 To certeyn lombardes redy in her hond  
 This somme of gold and took of hem his bond  
 And hom he goþ a mery as a popin iay  
 For wel he knew he stood in such array 1560  
 That needes most he wyne in such viage  
 A þousand frankes aboue al his costage  
 His wyf redy mette him at þe gate  
 As sche was wont of old usage algate 1564  
 And al þat night in mirþe þay ben sette  
 For he was riche and clerly out of dette  
 whan it was day þis marchaund gan embrace  
 his wyf al newe and kist hir on hir face 1568  
 And vp he goth and maked it ful tough  
 No more quod sche by god 3e haue ynough  
 And wantounly with him sche lay and playde  
 Till atte laste þus þis marchaund sayde 1572  
 By god quod he I am a litel wroþ  
 with 3ow my wyf alþough it be me loth  
 And wite 3e why by god as þat I gesse  
 3e han I-maad a maner straungenesse / 1576  
 Bitwixe me and my cosyn dan Iohn  
 3e schold haue warned me er I had goon

That he ȝow had an hundred frankes payd  
 By redy tokne and huld him euel appayd 1580  
 For þat I to him spak of cheuysaunce  
 Me semed so as by his countenaunce  
 But napeles by god of heuen king  
 I þoughe nought to axe him no þing 1584  
 I pray þe wif do no more so  
 Tel me alway er þat I fro þe go [leaf 199, back]  
 If eny dettour haue in myn absence  
 I-payd þe lest in þy necgligence 1588  
 I may him axe a þing þat he haþ payed  
 This wyf was not affered ne affrayed  
 But holly sche sayde and þat anoon  
 Mary I diffy þat false monk dan Iohn 1592  
 I kepe not of his tokenes neuer a del  
 he took me a certeyn gold/ þat wot I wel  
 what euel thedom on his monkes snowte/  
 For god it wot I wende wipoute doute 1596  
 That he had ȝeue it me by cause of ȝow  
 To do þer with myn honour and my prow  
 For cosynage and eek for bele cheer  
 That he haþ had ful ofte tyme heer 1600  
 But synnes þat I stonde in þis disioynt  
 I wol answer ȝow schortly to þe poynt  
 ȝe han mo slakke dettours þan am I  
 For I wol pay ȝow wel and redily 1604  
 Fro day to day and if so be I faile  
 I am ȝour wif score it vpon my taile  
 And I schal paye it as soone as I may  
 For by my troupe I haue on myn array 1608  
 And nought on wast bistowed it euery del  
 And for I haue bistowed it so wel  
 To ȝoure honour for goddes sake I say  
 As beþ nought wroþ but let vs laugh and play / 1612  
 ȝe schul my ioly body haue to wedde/  
 By god I wol not pay ȝow but on bedde /



Forȝeue it me myn owne spouse deere /  
Turne hiderward and make better cheere 1616  
This marchaund saugh noon oþer remedy  
And for to chide. it nas but' foly  
Sip þat' þe þing' may not' amendid be /  
wif' he sayde / and I forȝiue it þe 1620  
But' by þi lif' ne be no more so large  
keep better my good þis ȝiue I þe in charge  
Thus endeþ now my tale and god vs sende  
Talyng' ynough vnto our lyues ende / Amen / 1624

[Foot of page. No other break in the MS.]

**W**El sayd by corpus boones quod oure host' [leaf 200]  
 Now longe mot' þou sayle by þe cost'  
 Sir gentil maister gentil mariner  
 God ȝiue þe monk' a þousand last' quadeȝer 1628  
 haha felaws be war for such a iape  
 The monk' put' in þe mannes hood an ape  
 And in his wyues eek' by seint' austyn  
 Draweþ no monkes more vnto ȝour In 1632  
 But' now pasouer and let' vs loke aboute  
 who schal telle first' of' al þis route /  
 Anoper tale / and wip þat' wip þat' word he sayde /  
 As curteisly as it had ben a mayde / 1636  
 My lady prioresse by ȝour leue  
 So þat' I wist' I scholde ȝow not greue  
 I wolde deme þat' ȝe telle scholde  
 A tale next' if' so were þat' ȝe wolde / 1640  
 Now wol ȝe vouche sauf' my lady deere /  
 Gladly quod sche / and sayd in þis manere

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

[THE PROEM.]

**O** Lord oure lord þy name how merueylous ¶ *Domine domi-*  
 Is in þis large world I-sprad quod sche *nus noster.*  
 For nought oonly þy laude precious

Parformed is by men of heih degre  
 But by mouthes of children þy bounte ¶ *Ex ore infancium* 1647  
 Parformed is on oure brest soukyng  
 Som tyme schewe þay þin heriyng 1649

*[No stanza-breaks in the MS.]*

**W**herfore in laude as I best can or may 1650  
 Of þe and of þy white lily flour  
 which þat þe bar and is a mayde alway  
 To telle a story I wil do my labour  
 Nought þat I may encrease ȝoure honour 1654  
 For sche hir silf / is honour and roote  
 Of bounte next hir sone and soules boote/ 1656

**O** modir mayde. O mayde mooder fre / 1657  
 O bussȝ vnbrent/ brennyng in Moises sight/  
 That rauysshedest / doun fro þe deite  
 Thurgh þin humblesse þe gost þat in þe alight  
 Of whos vertu he in þin herte pigȝ 1661  
 Conceyued was þe fadres sapience *[leaf 200, back]*  
 help me to telle it in þy reuerence 1663

**L**ady þi bounte and þy magnificence 1664  
 Thy vertu and þi gret humilite  
 Ther may no tonge expres in no science  
 For som tyme lady er men pray to þe /  
 Thow gost biforn of þy benignite 1668  
 And getist vs þe light þurgh þy prayere /  
 To gyden vs þe way to þy sone sone so deere/ 1670

My connyng' is to weyk' o blisful queene 1671  
 For to declare þy grete worpinesse  
 That I may not þis in my wyt susteene  
 But as a child of twelf' month old or lesse  
 Than can vnnethes eny word expresse 1675  
 Right so fare I and þerfor I 3ou pray  
 Endith my song' þat I schal of 3ow say 1677

[A break of one line in the MS.]

[THE TALE.]

**T**Her was in acy in a greet' Citee 1678  
 Amonges cristen folk' a Iewerye  
 Susteyned by a lord of þat' contre  
 For foul vsure and lucre of felonye /  
 Hateful to crist' and to his compaignye / 1682  
 And þurgh þe strete men might' ride and wende /  
 For it' was fre and open at' euerich ende 1684

A litel scole of cristen folk' þer stood 1685  
 Doun at' þe forþer ende in which þer were  
 Children an heep ycomen of cristes blood  
 That lered in þat' scole 3er by 3ere  
 Such maner doctrine as men vsed þere 1689  
 This is to say to synge and to rede  
 As smale childer doon in her childhede / 1691

Among' þese children was a widow sone 1692  
 A litel clergeoun þat seue 3er was of age  
 That' day by day to scole was his wone  
 And eek' also wher-so he saugh þymage  
 Of cristes moder had he in vsage 1696  
 As him was taught' to knele a doun and say /  
 His Aue maria as he goþ by þe way [leaf 201] 1698

Thus hap þis widow hir litel child I-taught 1699

Oure blisful lady cristes moder deere

To worschip ay and he forȝat it nought

For cely child wil alway soone leere

But ay whan I remembre of þis matiere 1703

Seint Nicholas stont euer in my presence

For he so ȝong to crist dede reuerence 1705

This litil child his litel book lernynge 1706

As he sat in þe scole at his primere

He O alma redemptoris herde synge/

As children lerned her antiphonere

And as he durst he drough hem ner and neere 1710

And herkned euer þe wordes and þe note

Til he þe firste vers coupe al by rote 1712

Nought wist he what þis latyn was to say / 1713

For he so ȝong and tender was of age

But on a day his felaw gan he pray /

To expoune him þe song in his langage/

Or telle him what þis song was in vsage / 1717

This prayd he him to construe and declare

Ful often tyme vpon his knees bare / 1719

His felaw which þat elder was þan he 1720

Answerd him þus. þis song I. haue herd seye

was maked of our blisful lady fre

Hire to saluen and eek hire to preye

To ben our help and socour whan we deye 1724

I can no more expoune in this matere

I lerne song I can no more gramer 1726

And is þis song I-maad in reuerence 1727

Of cristes moder sayde þis Innocent

Now certes I wol do my diligence

To conne it al er cristemasse be went

Though þat I for my primer schal be schent / 1731

And schal be betyn pries in an hour

I wol it conne oure lady to honoure 1733

His felaw taught him homward priuely 1734

From day by day til he coupe it by rote

And þan he song it wel and boldely [leaf 201, back]

Twyes on þe day it passed þurgh his prote

From word to word accordyng to þe note 1738

To scoleward and homward whan he went

On cristes moder was set al his entent 1740

As I haue sayd þurghout þe Iewrye 1741

This litel child as he cam to and fro

Ful merily þan wold he synge and crie /

O alma Redemptoris euer mo

The swetnes hap his herte persed so 1745

Of cristes moder that to hir to pray

he can not stynt of syngyng by þe way / 1747

Oure firste foo þe serpent Sathanas 1748

That hath in Iewes hert his waspis nest

Vpswal and sayde / o ebreik peple alas

Is þis a þing to 3ow þat is honest

That such a boy schal walken as him lest 1752

In 3oure despyt and synge of such sentence

which is azens 3our lawes reuerence 1754

Fro þennes forth þe Iewes han conspired 1755

This Innocent out of þis world to enchace

An homicide þer to han 3e pay hired

That in an aley had a priue place

And as þe childe gan forþ by to pace 1759

This false iewe him hent and huld ful faste /

And kut his prote and prewe him in atte laste 1761

I say in a wardrobe þay him þrew 1762

wher as the Iewes purgen her entraile

O cursed folk! O herodes al newe

what! may þour euyl entente þou auaille

Morther wol out certeyn it wil nought! faile 1766

And namly þer þonour of! god schuld sprede

The blood out criep on þour cursed dede / 1768

O martir soudit to Virginite 1769

Now maystow synge folowyng! euer in oon

The white lomb celestial quod sche /

Of! which þe grete euangelist! seint! Iohn

In pathmos wroot! which seith þat þay goon 1773

Bifore þe lamb and synge a song! al newe [leaf 202]

That! neuer fleischly wommen þay knewe 1775

This pore widowe wayteþ al þis night! 1776

After þis litel child but he cometh nought

For which as soone as it! was dayes light!

with face pale in drede and busy þought!

Sche haþ at scole and elles-wher him sought! 1780

Til fynally sche gan of! hem aspye

That! he was last! seyn in þe Iewerie 1782

With moodres pite in hir brest! enclosed 1783

Sche goþ as sche were half! out! of! hir mynde

To euery place wher sche haþ supposed

By liklihede hir child for to fynde

And euer on cristes mooder meke and kynde 1787

Sche cried and atte laste þus sche wrought!

Among! þe cursed Iewes sche him sought! 1789

Sche freyned and sche prayed pitously 1790

To euery Iew þat! dwelled in þat! place

To telle hir if! hir child wente þer by

Thay sayden nay but Ihu of! his grace

3af in hir þought wipinne a litel space 1794  
 That in þat place after hir sone sche cryde  
 wher as he was cast in a put besyde / 1796

O grete god þat parformedist þin laude 1797  
 by mouth of Innocent; lo here þy might  
 This gemme of chastite þis emeraude  
 And eek of martirdom þe ruby bright  
 Ther he with prote I-kut lay vpright 1801  
 He. Alma redemptoris gan to synge  
 So lowde þat al þe place bigan to rynge 1803

The cristen folk þat þurgh þe strete went/ 1804  
 In comen for to wonder vpon þis þing  
 And hastily for the prouost þay sent  
 He cam anon wipoute tarying  
 And heriede crist þat is of heuen kyng 1808  
 And eek his moder honour of mankynde  
 And after þat þe Iewes let he bynde 1810

This child with pitous lamentacioun 1811  
 vp taken was syngyng his song alway [L. 25 P<sup>ms</sup>, back]  
 And with honour of gret processioun  
 Thay caried him vnto þe next abbay  
 His modir swownyng by þe beere lay 1815  
 Vnneþe might þe poeple þat was þere  
 This newe Rachel bringe fro þe beere 1817

With torment and with schamful deth echon 1818  
 This prouost doþ þese Iewes for to sterue  
 That of þis moerder wist and þat anon  
 he wolde no such cursednesse obserue  
 Enel schal haue þat euyl wol deserue 1822  
 Therefore with wilde hors he dede hem drawe  
 And after þat he heng hem by þe lawe 1824



- Vpon his beere ay lith þis Innocent 1825  
 Biforn þe chief<sup>t</sup> auter whiles þe masse last<sup>t</sup>  
 And after þat þabbot<sup>t</sup> with his couent<sup>t</sup>  
 Hap sped him for to burie him ful fast<sup>t</sup>  
 And whan þay halywater on him cast<sup>t</sup> 1829  
 3et<sup>t</sup> spak<sup>t</sup> þis child. whan spreynde was þe water  
 And song<sup>t</sup> O alma redemptoris mater 1831
- This abbot<sup>t</sup> which þat was an holy man 1832  
 As monkes ben or elles oughte be  
 This 3onge child to coniure he bigan  
 And sayd O deere child I halse þe  
 In vertu of þe holy trinite 1836  
 Tel me what is þy cause for to synge  
 Sith þat<sup>t</sup> þy throte is kit at<sup>t</sup> my semynge 1838
- My þrote is kit vnto my nekke boon 1839  
 Sayde þis child and as by way of kynde  
 I schulde han ben deed long<sup>t</sup> tyme a goon  
 But<sup>t</sup> Ihū crist<sup>t</sup> as 3e in bookes fynde  
 wol þat<sup>t</sup> his glorie laste and be in mynde 1843  
 And for þe worschip of<sup>t</sup> his moder deere  
 3et<sup>t</sup> may I synge. O alma lowde and cleere 1845
- This welle of<sup>t</sup> mercy cristes moder swete 1846  
 I loued alway as after my connynge  
 And whan þat<sup>t</sup> I my lyf schulde leete  
 To me sche cam and bad me for to synge  
 This antym verrailly in my deyinge [leaf 203] 1850  
 As 3e haue herd and whan þat<sup>t</sup> I had songe  
 Me þought<sup>t</sup> sche layde a grayn vnder my tonge 1852
- Wherfor I synge and synge moot certeyne 1853  
 In honour of<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> blisful mayden fre  
 Til fro my tonge taken is þe greyne  
 And after þat<sup>t</sup> þus saide sche to me

My litil child now wil I fecche þe 1857

whan þat þe grayn is fro þi tonge I-take

Be nought agast I wol þe nought forsake 1859

This holy monk this abbot him mene I 1860

His tonge out caught and took away þe greyn

And he ȝaf vp þe gost ful softly

And whan þe abbot hath þis wonder seyn

His salte teres striken doun as reyn 1864

And gruf he fel a doun vnto þe grounde

And stille he lay as he had ben y-bounde 1866

The couent eek lay on þe paupment 1867

wepung and heryng cristes moder deere

And after þat þay rise and forþ þay went

And took away þis martir fro his beere /

In a tombe of marble stooness cleere 1871

Enclosed þay þis litil body sweete

Ther he is now god leue vs for to meete 1873

O ȝonge hughe of lyncofn slayn also 1874

wip cursed iewes as it is notable /

For it nys but a litel while ago

Pray eek for vs we synful folk vnstable

That of his mercy god so merciablen 1878

On vs his grete mercy multiplie

For reuerence of his modir marie Amen 1880

[No break in the MS.]

**W**han sayd was þis miracle euery man 1881  
 As sober was þat wonder was to se  
 Til þat oure host to iape bigan

And þan at erst/ he loket vpon me  
 And sayde þus what man art þou quod he 1885  
 Thou lokest as þou woldest fynde an hare  
 For euer vpon þe ground I se þe stare / 1887

Approche ner and loke merily [leaf 208, back] 1888  
 Now ware þou sires and let þis man haue space  
 He in þe wast is schape as wel as I  
 This were a popet in an arm to embrace  
 For any womman smal and fair of face / 1892  
 He semeth eluisch by his countenaunce  
 For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce 1894

Say now som what sins other folk han said 1895  
 Telle vs a tale and þat of mirthe anoon  
 host quod I ne beþ nought euel apayd  
 For other tale certes can I noon  
 But of a rym I lerned 3ore agoon 1899  
 3e þat is good quod he now schul we heere  
 Som deynte þing me þinketh by his cheere 1901

[*Break of 1 line in the MS.*]

[No stanza-gaps are in the MS., and no lines are inset.]

[*The First Fit.*]

<p><b>L</b> Esteneþ lordyngs . in good entent          And I wol telle verrayment          Of myrthe and solas          Of a knyght was fair and gent          In batail and in tornament          His name was sir Thopas</p>	<p>1904     1907</p>
<p>I-bore he was in fer conntre          In Flaundres al byzonde þe se          At Poperyng in þe place          His fader was a man ful fro          And lord he was of þat contre          As it was goddes grace</p>	<p>   1910   1913</p>
<p>Sir Thopas wax a doughty swayn          whyt was his face as payndemayn          His lippes reed as Rose /          His rode is lik / scarlet en grayn          And I 3ow telle in good certayn          He had a semly nose</p>	<p>   1916   1919</p>
<p>His heer his berd was lik / safroun          That to his girdil raught a doun          His schoon of Cordewane          Of Brigges were his hosen broun          His robe was of Sicladoun          That coste many a lane</p>	<p>   1922   1925</p>

[leaf 204]

He coupe hunt' at' wilde deer  
 And ride on haukyng' for ryuer  
     with gray goshauk' on honde 1928  
 Therto he was a good archeer  
 Of' wrastelyng' was noon his peer  
     Ther eny Ram schal stonde / 1931

Ful many mayde bright' in bour  
 þay mourne for him paramour  
     whan hem were bet' to slepe 1934  
 But' he was chast' and no lecchour  
 And sweet' as is þe brembre flour  
     That' bereþ þe reede heepe / 1937

And so it fel vpon a day  
 For soþ as I ȝow telle may /  
     Sir Thopas wold out' ryde 1940  
 he worth vpon his steede gray  
 And in his hond a launcegay  
     A long' sword by his syde 1943

he priketh þurgh a fair forest/  
 Ther In is many a wilde best/  
     ȝe boþe buk / and hare 1946  
 And as he prikeþ north and Est'  
 I tel it ȝow hym had almeſt'  
     Bityd a sory care 1949

Ther springen herbes greet' and smale  
 The licorys and þe Cetewale /  
     And many a clow gilofre 1952  
 And notemuge to put' in ale  
 wheþir it be moist or stale  
     Or for to lay in cofre 1955

The briddes synge it is no nay  
 The sperhauk' and þe popiniay  
 That' ioye it was to heere 1958

The þrostilcok' maad eek' his lay  
 The woode dowue vpon þe spray  
 So song' ful lowde and cleere 1961

Sir Thopas fel in loue-longing'  
 whan that' he herde þe briddes synge [leaf 204, back]  
 And priked as he were wood 1964  
 His faire steede in his prikyng  
 So swette þat' men might' him wrynge  
 His sydes were al blood 1967

Sir Thopas eek' so wery was  
 For priking' on þe softe gras  
 So feers was his corrage 1970  
 That' doun he layd him in þe place  
 To make his steede som solace  
 And ȝaf' him good forage 1973

O seinte Mary benedicite  
 what' eylith þis loue at' me  
 To bynde me so sore 1976  
 My dremed al this night' par de  
 An elf' queen schal my lemman be  
 And slepe vnder my gore 1979

An Elf' queen wol I haue I-wis  
 For in this world no womman is  
 worthy to be my make 1982  
 In tounne [as part of l. 1982]

Alle opir wommen I forsake  
 And to an Elf' queen I me take  
 By dale and eek' by doune 1986

In to his sadil he clomb anoon  
 And priked ouer stile and stoon  
     An elf<sup>e</sup> queen for to spye 1989  
 Til he so longe hap ryden and goon  
 That he fond in a priue woon  
     The contre of<sup>e</sup> fairye 1992  
         ¶ So wylde [as part of l. 1992]  
 For in þat contre was þer noon :  
 [. . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
     Neither wif<sup>e</sup> ne childe [as part of l. 1994] 1996

Til þat þer cam a greet geaunt/  
 his name was sir Olifaunt<sup>e</sup>  
     A perilous man of<sup>e</sup> dede 1999  
 he swar child by Termagaunt<sup>e</sup>  
 For if þou prike out of myn haunt<sup>e</sup>  
     Anoon I slee þe 2002  
         with my mace [as part of l. 2002]  
 heer is þe queen of<sup>e</sup> fayerie  
 with harp . and lute and Symphonye  
     dwell yng<sup>e</sup> in þis place [as part of l. 2005] 2006

The child sayd also mote I the [leaf 205]  
 To morwe wil I meete with þe  
     whan I haue myn armure 2009  
 And ȝit I hope par ma fay  
 That þou schalt<sup>e</sup> with þis launcegay  
     Abyen it ful soure 2012  
         ¶ þy mawe [as part of l. 2012]  
 Schal I persyn if þat I may  
 Er it be fully prime of<sup>e</sup> day  
     For heer schalt<sup>e</sup> þou be slawe 2016

Sir thopas drough on bak' ful fast'  
 This geaunt' at' him stoon'es cast /  
 Out' of' a fell staf' slynge 2019

But' faire eschapeþ child thopas  
 And al it' was þurgh' goddis gras  
 And þurgh' his berynge / 2022

þet' lesteneth lordynges to my tale /  
 Merier þan þe nightyngale /  
 I wol 3ow rounne 2025

how sir thopas wip' sides smale /  
 Prikyng'e ouer hul and dale  
 Is come ageyn to tounne 2028

his mery men comaunded he  
 To make him boþe game and gle  
 For needes most' he fight' 2031

with a geaunt' with heedes þre  
 For paramours and iolite  
 Of' oon þat schon ful bright 2034

Do come he sayde my mynstrales  
 And gestours for to telle tales  
 Anoon in myn armynge 2037

Of' Romaunces þat ben reales  
 Of' popes and of' Cardinales  
 And eek' of' loue likyng'e 2040

Thay fet' him first' þe swete wyn  
 And made him eek' in a maselyn  
 A real spicerye 2043

Of' gyngebred þat' was so fyn  
 And licorys and eek' comyn  
 with sugre þat is trye / [leaf 205, back] 2046



He dede next<sup>t</sup> his white leere  
Of cloth of lake whyt<sup>t</sup> and cleere

2049

A brech and eek<sup>t</sup> a schert<sup>t</sup>  
And next<sup>t</sup> his schert<sup>t</sup> an aketoun  
And ouer þat<sup>t</sup> an haberioun  
For persyng<sup>t</sup> of his hert<sup>t</sup> 2052

And ouer þat<sup>t</sup> a fyn hauberk<sup>t</sup>  
was al I-wrought<sup>t</sup> of Iewes werk<sup>t</sup>  
Ful strong<sup>t</sup> it<sup>t</sup> was of plate 2055  
And ouer þat<sup>t</sup> his cote-armour  
As whyt<sup>t</sup> as is a lily flour  
In which he wold debate 2058

his scheld was al of gold so red  
And þer Inne was a bores heed  
A charbocle by his syde / 2061  
And ther he swor on ale and bred  
How þat<sup>t</sup> þe geaunt<sup>t</sup> schal be deed  
Bytyde what<sup>t</sup> bytyde / 2064

His iambeux were of quirboily  
His swerdes schethe of yuory  
His helm of latoun bright<sup>t</sup> 2067  
His sadel was of rowel boon  
His bridel as þe sonne schon  
Or as þe moone light<sup>t</sup> 2070

his spere was of Cipres  
That bodeth werre and no þing<sup>t</sup> pees  
The heed ful scharp I-grounde / 2073  
His steede was al dappul gray  
Hit goth an ambel in þe way /  
Ful softely and rounde 2076

¶ In londe [In line 2076]

lo lordes heer is a fyt

If 3e wil eny more of it

To telle it wol I fonde 2080

[No break in the MS.]

[The Second Fit.]

**N**ow hold 3our mouth for charite  
Bope knight and lady fre

And herkneþ to my spelle 2083

Of batail and of chiualry

And of ladys loue drewery [leaf 206]

Anoon I wol 3ow telle / 2086

Men speken of Romauns of pris

Of horn child and of ypotis

Of Beuys and sir Gy 2089

Of sir libeaux and pleyn damour

But sir thopas bereþ þe flour

Of real Chiualry 2092

His goode steede he bistrood

And forth vpon his way he glood

As spark out of þe bronde 2095

Vpon his crest he bar a tour

And þer In stiked a lily flour

God schilde his corps fro schonde 2098

And for he was a knyȝt auntrous

He nolde slepen in noon hous

But liggen in his hood 2101

his brighte helm was his wonger

And by him baytith his destrer

Of herbes fyne and goode/ 2104

SIX-TEXT 198  
GROUP B. § 8. SIR THOPAS. Harleian 7334. 475

Himself drank water of þe welle

As dede þe knight of pertinelle /

So worthy vnder wede

2107

[ . . . . . no gap in the MS.]

**N**O mor of þis for goddes dignite  
 Quod our hoste / for þou makest me  
 So wery of þy verrey lewednesse  
 That al so wisly god my soule blesse / 2112  
 Myn eeres aken for þy drasty speche  
 Now such a rym þe deuel I byteche  
 This may wel be rym dogerel quop he  
 why so quod I why wilt þou lette me 2116  
 More of my tale þan anoþer man  
 Syn þat it is þe beste rym þat I can  
 By god quod he for plainly at o word  
 þy drasty rymyng is not worth a tord 2120  
 þou dost nought elles but despendist tyme  
 Sir at o word þou schalt no lenger ryme  
 let se wher þou canst tellen ought in gest  
 Or telle in prose som what atte lest [leaf 206, back] 2124  
 In which þer be so merthe or doctrine  
 Gladly quod I by goddes swete pyne /  
 I wol 3ow telle a litel þing in prose  
 That oughte like 3ow as I suppose / 2128  
 Or elles certes 3e be to daungerous  
 It is a moral tale vertuons  
 Al be it told som tyme in sondry wise  
 Of sondry folk as I schal 3ow deuyse / 2132  
 As thus . 3e woot þat euery euangelist  
 þat telleþ vs þe peyne of Ihū crist  
 Ne saith alle þing as his felawes doþ  
 But napeles here sentence is al sop 2136  
 And alle accorden as in here sentence  
 Al be þer in her tellyng difference /

For some of hem sayn more and some lesse /  
 whan þay his pitous passioun expresse / 2140  
 I mene of mark' mathew luk' and Iohn  
 But douteles her sentence is al oon  
 Therfor lordynges alle I ȝow biseche  
 If ȝow þink' þat I varye as in my speche 2144  
 As þus þough þat I telle som what' more  
 Of prouerbes þan I haue herd bifore  
 Comprehended in þis litel tretys here /  
 To enforcen with þeffect' of my matiere 2148  
 And þough I not þe same wordes say  
 As ȝe haue herd / ȝit' to ȝow alle I pray  
 Blameþ me nought for in my sentence  
 Schul ȝe no wher fynde difference 2152  
 Fro þe sentence of þis tretys lite  
 After þe which þis litil tale I wryte  
 And þerfor herkenep what' I schal say  
 And let' me tellen al my tale I pray 2156

[*Break of 5 lines in the MS.*]

*[There are no line-numbers or paragraph-breaks in the MS. Tyrnwhitt's breaks are kept here, as they were in the Six-Text, to prevent slight differences in the Texts throwing out many lines.]*

[leaf 207]

[2157]

**A** 3ong' man called Melibeus mighty and riche  
bygat vpon his wif' þat' called was prudens. a  
doughter: which þat' called was Sophie //

[2158] Vpon a day byfel þat' for his desport' he  
is went' in to þe felde him to / play. [2159] his  
wif' and his douȝter eek' hap' he laft' in-with his hous of  
which þe dores were fast' I-schitte. [2160] þre of his  
olde foos han it' espyed. and setten laddres to þe walles  
of his hous and by þe wyndowes ben entred [2161] and  
beetyn his wyf' and woundid his douȝter wip fyue  
mortal woundes in fyue sondry places [2162] þat' is to  
sayn in here feet' in here hondes in here eeres in here  
nose and in here mouth and lafte her for deed and  
went' away

[2163] ¶ whan Melibeus retourned was in to his  
hous and seigh al þis meschief' he lik' a man mad  
rendyng' his cloþes gan wepe and crie.

[2164] Prudens his wyf' as ferforth as sche dorste  
bisouȝt' him of his wepyng' to stynte / [2165] But not  
for þi he gan to crie euer lenger þe more

[2166] ¶ this noble wyf' prudence remembred hire  
vpon þe sentens of Ovide in his book' that' cleped is þe  
remedy of loue / wher as he seiþ [2167] ¶ he is a fool  
þat' destourbeþ þe moder to wepe in þe deth of hir  
childe til sche haue I-wept' hir fille as for a certeyn tyme  
[2168] and þan schal man doon his diligence as with  
amyable wordes hire to recomforte and praye hire of

hire wepyng<sup>r</sup> to stinte [2169] ¶ For which resoun þis noble wif<sup>r</sup> prudens suffred hir housbonde for to wepe and crie / as for a certeyn space. [2170] and whan sche seigh hir tyme<sup>r</sup> sche sayd him in þis wise ¶ Allas my lord quod sche why make ȝe ȝoure self<sup>r</sup> for to be lik<sup>r</sup> a fool. [2171] For soþe it apperteyneth not<sup>r</sup> to a wys man to make such sorwe. [2172] ȝoure douȝter wip þe grace of<sup>r</sup> god schal warischt<sup>r</sup> be and eschape. [2173] and al were it so þat sche right now were deed<sup>r</sup> ȝe ne oughte nouȝt<sup>r</sup> as for hir deþ ȝoure silf<sup>r</sup> destroye [2174] ¶ Senec saip. þe wise man schal not<sup>r</sup> take to gret<sup>r</sup> discomfort for þe deth of<sup>r</sup> his children<sup>r</sup> [2175] but certes he schulde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abydeþ þe deþ of<sup>r</sup> his owne persone

[2176] ¶ This melibeus answerde anon & sayde ¶ what<sup>r</sup> man quod he schuld of<sup>r</sup> his wepynge stynte þat<sup>r</sup> haþ a cause for to wepe [2177] ¶ Ihū crist<sup>r</sup> ¶ Qualiter ille  
oure lord himself<sup>r</sup> wepte for þe deth of<sup>r</sup> lazarus his christus fleuit  
frend [2178] ¶ Prudens answerde Certes wel I wot/  
attemperel wepyng<sup>r</sup> is no þing<sup>r</sup> defended to him þat<sup>r</sup> sorwful is. amonges folk<sup>r</sup> in sorwe. But<sup>r</sup> it is rap<sup>r</sup>er graunted  
him to wepe / [2179] þe apostel poule vnto þe Apostolus ad  
Romeyns writeþ. A man schal reioyce with hem þat<sup>r</sup> maken romanos  
ioye / And wepe with such folk<sup>r</sup> as wepen [2180] ¶ But  
pough<sup>r</sup> attemperel <sup>1</sup>wepyng<sup>r</sup> be graunted<sup>r</sup> Outrageous [<sup>1</sup> leaf 207, back]  
wepynge certes is defended // [2181] Measure of<sup>r</sup> wepynge  
be conserued. after þe lore of<sup>r</sup> crist<sup>r</sup> þat<sup>r</sup> techeth vs senec  
[2182] ¶ whan þat<sup>r</sup> þi frend is deed quod he<sup>r</sup> let<sup>r</sup> nought  
þin yen to moyste ben of<sup>r</sup> teres ne to moche drye  
¶ Al þough the teeres come out<sup>r</sup> of<sup>r</sup> þine eyzen<sup>r</sup> let<sup>r</sup> he not<sup>r</sup> falle  
[2183] ¶ And whan þou hast<sup>r</sup> forgon þy frend<sup>r</sup> do dili-  
gence to gete anoper frende ¶ And þis is more wisdom  
þan to wepe for þy frend which þat<sup>r</sup> þou hast lorn.  
For þer in is no boote [2184] ¶ And þerfore if<sup>r</sup> ȝe  
gouerne ȝow by sapience put away sorwe out<sup>r</sup> of<sup>r</sup> ȝoure  
hert [2185] ¶ Remembreth ȝow þat<sup>r</sup> Ihc<sup>r</sup> Sirac saip

¶ A man þat is ioyous and glad in herte: it him conserveth florischinge in his age ¶ But soply sorweful herte makeþ his boones drye [2186] ¶ he saip eek þus. þat sorwe in herte sleþ ful many a man [2187] ¶ Salamon saip þat right as motthes in schepes flees annoyeth þe clothes. and þe smale wormes to þe tre: Right / so annoyeth sorwe to þe herte [2188] ¶ wherfore vs oughte as wel in þe dep of oure children as in þe losse of oure goodes temporales haue pacience

[2189] ¶ Remembreth 3ow vpon þe pacien Iop ¶ whan he hadde lost his children and his temporal substance and in his body endured and receyued ful many a greuous tribulacioun: 3it sayde he þus [2190] ¶ Oure lord it/ sent/ vnto me Oure lord it hap raft fro me. Right so as oure lord wil: ri3t so be it doon ¶ I-blessed be þe name of oure lord [2191] To þese forsayde þinges answerith Melibeus vnto his wif Prudens Alle þine wordes ben soþ quod he and þerto profytable ¶ But soply myn herte is so troubled wip þis sorwe: þat I noot/ what to doone [2192] ¶ Let calle quod prudence þy trewe frendes alle and þy linage whiche þat ben trewe & wise. telleth hem 3oure greuaunce and herken what þay say in counseilynge. and 3ow gouerne after here sentence. [2193] ¶ Salomon saith ¶ werke al þi þing by conseil and þe þar neuer rewe

[2194] ¶ þan by þe conseil of his wyf prudens this melibeus let calle a gret congregacioun of peple [2195] as Surgiens. phisiciens olde and 3onge and some of his olde enemyes recounsiled as by her semblaunt to his loue and to his grace. [2196] and þer wip al þer come some of his neigheours þat deden him reuerence more for drede þan for loue as happed ofte [2197] ¶ Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers and wise aduoketes lerned in þe lawe

[2198] ¶ And whan þese folk togidere assemblid were: This melibeus in sorwful wyse schewed hem his caas.



[2199] and by þe maner of his speche: it semed þat in <sup>1</sup>herte he bar a cruel Ire redy to do vengeance vpon his foos. and sodeynly desirede þat þe werre schulde bygyrne. [2200] but natheles 3it axed he her counseil in þis matier. [2201] ¶ A Sirurgien by licens and assent of suche as were wyse vp ros and to melibeus sayde as 3e may hie

[2202] ¶ Sire quod he as to vs Sirurgiens appertieneth þat we do to euery wight þe beste þat we can wher as we ben withholde and to oure pacient þat we do no damage [2203] ¶ wherfore it happeþ many tyme and ofte þat whan tweye han euerich wounded oþer: oo. same surgien heleþ hem boþe. [2204] where vnto oure art it is not perteyned to norische werre ne parties to supporte: [2205] but certes as to warisching of 3oure douȝter al be it so þat sche perilously be woundid: we schullen do so tentyf besynes fro day to night þat with þe grace of god sche schal be hool and sound als soone as it is possible [2206] ¶ Almost right in þe same wise þe phisiciens answerden: saue þat þay sayden a fewe wordes more [2207] ¶ That ryght as maladies ben cured by her contraries: Right so schal men warissch werre by vengeance [2208] ¶ His neyhe-boures ful of enuye his feyned freendes þat semede recounsiled his flatereres [2209] maden semblaunt of wepyng and appaired and aggregated moche of þis matiere in preisyng gretly melibe of might. of power of Riches. and of frendes despisinge þe power of his aduersaries [2210] and sayden outerly þat he anon schulde wreke him on his aduersaries be bygynnyng of werre

[2211] vp ros þanne an aduocate þat was wys. by leue and by counseil of oþere þat were wise and sayde / [2212] ¶ Lordynges. þe needes for whiche we ben assemblit in þis place is ful heuy þing and an heigh matier [2213] by cause of þe wrong & of þe wikkednes þat hap ben doon and eek of þe grete damages þat

in tyme comyng<sup>t</sup> ben possible to falle for þe same [2214] and eek<sup>t</sup> by cause of þe grete richesse and power of þe partes bothe [2215] for þe whiche resouns it were a ful gret peril to erren in these materes [2216] ¶ wherfore melibeus þis is oure sentence ¶ we counseile ȝow abouen alle þinges þat<sup>t</sup> riȝt anoon þou do diligence in kepyng<sup>t</sup> of þy body in such a wyse þat þou ne wante noon espye ne wacche þy body for to saue [2217] ¶ And after þat<sup>t</sup> we counseile þat in þin hous þou sette sufficaunt garnisoun So þat<sup>t</sup> þay may as wel þy body as þin hous defende [2218] ¶ But certes for to moeue werre ne sodeynly for to do vengeance<sup>!</sup> we may not deme in so litel tyme þat<sup>t</sup> it were profitable [2219] ¶ wherfore we axen leysir <sup>1</sup>and a space [. . . .] in þis caas to demen [2220] ¶ For þe comune prouerbe saiþ þis ¶ he þat<sup>t</sup> soone demep<sup>t</sup> soone schal repente [2221] ¶ And eek<sup>t</sup> men sayn þat þilke Iuge is wys þat soone vnderstondep<sup>t</sup> a matier and Iuggeþ by leysir. [2222] ¶ For al be it so þat / alle taryinge is anoyful<sup>!</sup> algates it is no reproef<sup>t</sup> in ȝeuyng<sup>e</sup> of Iuggement. ne of ve[n]gaunce takyng<sup>t</sup> whan it is suffisaunt and resonable [2223] and þat schewed oure lord ihū crist by ensample ¶ For whan þat þe womman þat was I-take in aduoutrie was brouȝt in his presence to knowen what schulde be doon of hir persone Al be it þat he wist him self<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he wolde answer<sup>e</sup>! ȝit wolde he not answer sodeynly. but<sup>t</sup> he wolde haue deliberacioun and in þe ground hem wrot twyes. [2224] and by þese causes we axe deliberacioun. and we schul þanne by þe grace of god counseile þe þing<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> schal be profytable

[2225] ¶ Vpstarten þenne þe ȝonge folkes anoon at oones<sup>!</sup> and þe moste part<sup>t</sup> of þat<sup>t</sup> companye han skorned þese olde wise men and bygonne to make noyse and sayden [2226] ¶ Right so as whil þat/ Iren is hoot men scholden smyte<sup>!</sup> Right<sup>t</sup> so schulde men wreke here wronges whil

þat þay ben freische and newe ¶ And with lowde vois þay cryde . werre . werre .

[2227] ¶ Vproos þo oon of þese olde wise and with his hond made countenaunce þat men schulde holde hem stille and ȝiuen him audience [2228] ¶ lordyngs quod he ther is ful many a man þat crieth werre werre wot ful litel what werre amounteth . [2229] werre at his bygynnyng haþ so greet and entre and so large þat euery wight may entre whan him likeþ and lightly fynde werre [2230] ¶ But certes what ende schal falle þerof : it is not lightly to knowe [2231] For soþly whan þat werre is oones bygonne : þer is ful many a child vnborne of his mooder þat schal sterue ȝong by cause of þilke werre or elles lyue in sorwe and deye in wrecchidnes [2232] ¶ & þerfore er þat eny werre be bygonne . men moste haue gret counseil and gret deliberacioun . [2233] ¶ And whan þis olde man wende to enforce his tale by resouns wel neigh alle at oones bygonne þay to rise for to breke his tale and beden him fulofte his wordes to abrigge . [2234] For soþly he þat prechep to hem that liste not to heere his wordes his sermoun hem anoyeth [2235] ¶ For Ihesus Sirac saith þat wepyng in musik is a noyous þing . þis is to say ¶ As moche auaylep to speke tofore folk / to whiche his speche annoyep : as it is to synge byfore hem whiche þat wepith [2236] <sup>1</sup>¶ And whan þis wise man saugh him wanted audience : al schamefast he sette him down agayn [2237] ¶ For Salamon saith . ther as þou may haue noon audience : enforce þe not to speke [2238] ¶ I se wel quod þis wise man þat þe comune prouerbe is soþ ¶ That good counseil wantith whan it is most neede

[2239] ¶ Ȝit hadde þis melibeus in his counseil many folk þat priuely in his eere han counseled him certein þinges and counseled him þe contrarie in general audience

[2240] ¶ whan melibeus hadde herd ȝet þe grettest

party of his counseil were accorded þat he schulde make werre. Anoon he consented to here counseilyng and fully affermed here sentence [2241] ¶ Thanne dame Prudence whan þat sche saugh þat hir housbonde schop him to wreke him of his enemyes and to gynne werre: / Sche in ful humble wise whan sche saugh hire tyme sayde him þese wordes [2242] ¶ My lord quod sche I ȝow biseche as hertily as I dar and kan ne haste ȝow nought to faste and for alle guerdouns as ȝeue me audience [2243] ¶ For Peres Alfons saith ¶ who þat doþ to þe ouþer good or harm: haste þe nought to quyten him. For in þis wise þy freend wil abyde: and þin enemy schal þe lenger lyue in drede [2244] ¶ The prouerbe saip ¶ he hastith wel þat wisly can abyde and in wikked haste is no profyt

[2245] ¶ This melibeus answerde vn to his wyf prudens ¶ I purpose not quod he to werke by þy counseil for many causes and resouns ¶ For certes euery wight wolde holde me þanne a fool [2246] ¶ þis is to sayn ¶ If I for þy counseil wolde chaunge þinges þat affermed ben by so many wise: [2247] I say þat alle wommen be wikked and noon good of hem alle ¶ For of a þousand men saip Salomon I fond oon good man: But certes of alle wommen good womman fond I neuer noon [2248] ¶ And also certes if I gouernede me by þy counseil it schulde seme that I hadde ȝiuen to þe ouer me þe maistry and god forbeede er it so were [2249] ¶ For Ihe Syrac saip þat if a wif haue maistrie sche is contrarious to hir housbond [2250] ¶ and Salomon saith ¶ Neuer in þy lif to þy wyf ne to þy child ne to þy freend ne ȝeue no power ouer þiself ¶ For better it were þat þy children axen of þy persone þinges þat been needful to hem þan þou se þiself in þe hondes of þy children [2251] ¶ And also if I wolde werke by þy counselynge certes it most som tyme be secre til it were tyme þat it moste be

knowe and þis ne may not be [2252] [ . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . [2253] . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]

[2254] whan dame Prudence ful debonerly and  
 with gret pacience hadde herd al þat hir housbonde  
 liked for to seye ¶ Than axed sche of him licence <sup>1</sup>for to  
 speke and sayde in þis wise [2255] ¶ My lord quod sche  
 as to 3oure firste resoun certes it may lightly be  
 answered. For I say it is no foly to chaunge  
 counsel whan þe þing/ is chaungid. For elles whan  
 þe þing<sup>t</sup> semeþ oþerwise þan it was biforn  
 [2256] And moreouer I say þough þat<sup>t</sup> 3e han  
 sworn and I-hight to parforme 3oure emprise And  
 napeles 3e wayue to parforme þilke same emprise  
 by iuste cause men schulde not say þerfore þat/ 3e were  
 a lyere ne forsworn [2257] For þe book/ seiþ þat<sup>t</sup> þe  
 wise man makeþ no lesyng<sup>t</sup> whan he torneth his corrage to  
 þe better [2258] ¶ And al be it so þat 3oure emprise be  
 establid and ordeyned by gret multitude of poeple: 3it  
 thar 3e not accomplise þilke same ordinaunce but 3ou like /  
 [2259] For þe troupe of þing<sup>t</sup> and þe profyt<sup>t</sup> ben  
 rather founde in fewe folk<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> ben wise and ful of  
 resoun þan by gret multitude of folk<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> euery man  
 crieth and clatereþ what<sup>t</sup> þat him likeþ soþely  
 such multitude is not honest [2260] ¶ An to þe secounde  
 resoun wher as 3e sayn þat alle wommen ben wikke:  
 Saue 3oure grace. Certis 3e despise alle wommen in þis  
 wise and þat alle despysith seiþ þe book /  
 [2261] And senec saith who-so wil haue Sapi-  
 ence schal no man despraise but he schal gladly teche þe  
 science þat he can wiþoute presumpcioun of pryde  
 [2262] and suche þinges as he nought<sup>t</sup> can he  
 schal not ben aschamed to lerne hem and enquere of lasse

[<sup>1</sup> leaf 200, back]

folk þan himself [2263] ¶ And sire þer hap  
 be ful many a good womman [ . . . . .  
 [2264] . . . . . ] if alle  
 wommen hadde ben wikke [2265] after þat for  
 þe grete bounte þat is in wommen: Oure lord ihu crist/  
 whan he was risen fro deþ to lyue apperede raper to a  
 womman þan to his apostles. [2266] ¶ And þough  
 þat Salamon say he fond neuer good womman  
 It folwith nouȝt þerfore þat alle wommen ben  
 wikke. [2267] For þough þat he fonde noone goode  
 wommen certes many a noþer man hap founden  
 many a womman ful goode and trewe [2268] ¶ Or elles  
 parauenture þentent of Salamon was þis as in  
 souereyn bounte. he fond no womman [2269] þis is to  
 say þat þer is no wight þat hap souerein bounte  
 saue god aloone as he himself recorderþ in his euaun-  
 gelie. [2270] For þer nys no creature so good þat him  
 wantith som-what of þe perfeccioun of god þat is his  
 makere [2271] ¶ Ȝoure þridde resoun is þis. ȝe seyn. þat if  
 ȝe gouerned ȝow by counsel of me it schulde seme þat ȝe  
 hadde yeue me the maystry and þe lordschipe ouer ȝoure  
 persone. [2272] sire saue ȝoure grace it is not so. For  
 if so were þat no man schulde be counseiled but by  
 hem þat hadde maystrye and lordschipe of his persone:  
 men wolde nought be counseiled so ofte [2273] ¶ For soply  
 þilke man þat axeth <sup>1</sup>counseil of a purpos. ȝet hap he  
 fre chois wheþer he wil werke by þat purpos or  
 noon [2274] ¶ And so to ȝoure ferþe resoun þer ȝe  
 sayn þat the ianglerie of wommen can hyde þinges þat  
 þey wot not of as who saith þat a womman can nought  
 hyde þat at sche woot: [2275] Sire þese wordes ben vnder-  
 stonde of wommen þat ben iangelers and wikke.  
 [2276] of whiche wommen men sayn þat þre þinges  
 dryuen a man out of his oughne hous þat is to say. smoke.  
 droppynge of reyn and wikked wyfes. [2277] of

suche wommen seiþ salomon þat it were better to a man to  
 dwelle in desert þan with a womman þat is riotous [2278] and  
 sire by þoure leue þat am not I [2279] ¶ For ȝe han ful  
 ofte assayed my grete scilence and my grete pacience and  
 eek how wel þat I can hyde and hele þinges þat  
 ben secrely to hyde [2280] ¶ And soþly as to  
 þoure fyfte resoun wher as ȝe sayn þat in wikkede coun-  
 seil wommen venquisscheth men. god wot þilke resoun  
 stont here in no stede / [2281] For vnderstondith now ȝe  
 aȝein counseil to do wickidnes [2282] and if ȝe wil  
 wirke wickidnes and þoure wyf restreyne þilke  
 wicked purpos and ouercome ȝou by resoun and by  
 good counseil: [2283] Certes þoure wyf oweth raþer be  
 preised than y-blamed / [2284] ¶ Thus schulde ȝe vnder-  
 stonde þe philosopher þat seiþ in wicked counseil  
 wommen venquyschen her housbondes [2285] ¶ And þer  
 as ȝe blame alle wymmen and here resouns: I schal schewe  
 by many resouns and ensamples þat many a womman hath  
 ben ful good and ȝit been and here counseiles ful holsome  
 and profitable [2286] ¶ Eke some men han sayd þat þe  
 counseilyng of wommen is ouþer to dere or to  
 litel of pris [2287] But al be it so þat ful many a  
 womman is badde and hir counseil vile and not worþ:  
 ȝet han men founde many a ful good womman and ful  
 discret and wys in counseilyng [2288] ¶ lo Iacob by  
 counseil of his moder Rebecca wan þe blessyng of  
 his fader ysaak and þe lordschipe of alle his breþeren  
 [2289] ¶ Iudith by hire goode counseil delyuered þe Citee of  
 Bethulie in which sche dwellid out of þe hous of  
 Olophernus þat had it bysegged and wolde it al destroye  
 [2290] ¶ Abigayl deliuered Nabal hir housbond fro  
 Dauid þe king þat wolde haue I-slayn him and appesed  
 þe Ire of þe kyng by hir witte and by hir good counseil-  
 ynge [2291] ¶ Hester by good counseil enhaunsed gretly  
 þe poeple of god In þe regne of assuerus þe kyng  
 [2292] and þe same bounte in good counseilyng of many

a good womman may men rede and telle [2293] And more  
 ouer whan oure lord had creat adam oure forme fader:  
 he sayde in þis wise [2294] ¶ Hit is not goode to be a  
 man aloone. make we to him an help semblable to him  
 self [2295] ¶ here may ȝe se þat if þat a womman  
 were not <sup>1</sup>good and hir counseil good and profytable:  
 [2296] oure lord god of heuen wolde neither haue wrouȝt  
 hem ne called hem help of man but raper confusioun to  
 man [2297] ¶ And þer sayde oones a clerk in tuo versus  
 ¶ what is better than gold. Iasper. And what is better þan  
 Iasper: wisdom. [2298] and what is better than  
 wisdom: womman. and what is better than good  
 womman: No þing [2299] ¶ And sire by many oþer  
 resouns may ȝe se þat many wommen ben goode  
 and [. . . *no gap in MS.*] profitable [2300] and þerfore  
 if ȝe wil truste to my counseil: I schal restore ȝou  
 ȝoure douȝter hool and sound [2301] ¶ and eek I wil doon  
 ȝou so moche þat ȝe schul haue honour in þis cause

[2302] ¶ whan Melibe had herd þese wordes of his  
 wif prudens: he seide þus. [2303] ¶ I se wel þat þe  
 word of Salomon is soþ ¶ he seith þat þe wordes þat  
 ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce been hony combes.  
 For þay ȝeuen swetnes to þe soule. and holmes  
 to þe body [2304] ¶ And wyf bycause of þy swete  
 wordes and eek for I haue assayed and proued þi grete  
 sapiens & þi grete troupe: I wil gouerne me by þy  
 counseil in alle þinges

[2305] ¶ Now sire quod dame prudens and syn ȝe  
 vouchen sauf to be gouerned by my counseilyng: I wil  
 enforme ȝou how ȝe schul gouerne ȝoure self in chesyng  
 of ȝoure counseil [2306] ¶ ȝe schul first/ in alle ȝoure  
 werkes mekely biseche to þe hihe god þat he wol  
 be ȝour counseilour [2307] & schape ȝou to þat  
 entent þat he ȝiue ȝou counseil and confort as taughte  
 Toby his sone [2308] ¶ At alle tymes þou schalt blesse



god and pray him to dresse þy wayes. and loke þat alle þi counseiles be in him for euermore [2309] ¶ Seint Iame eek saith ¶ If eny of 3ow haue neede of sapiens axe it of god. [2310] and aftirward þanne schul 3e take counseil in 3oure self. and examine wel 3oure þou3tes of suche þinges as 3ou þinkip þat is best for 3oure profyt [2311] and þanne schul 3e dryue fro 3oure hertes þo þat ben contrarie to good counseil. [2312] þat is to say. Ire. coueytise. and hastynes

[2313] ¶ First he þat axep counseil of himself. certes he moste be wipoute Ire. for many cause [2314] ¶ The first is þis ¶ He þat hap gret Ire and wrappe in himself. he weneth alwey he may do þing þat he may not doo [2315] ¶ And secoundly he þat is Irous and wroþ. he may not wel deme [2316] ¶ and he þat may not wel deme: may nought wel counseile [2317] ¶ The þridde is þis. þat he þa is Irous and wroth as saip Senec may not speke but blameful þinges [2318] and with his vicious wordes he stireþ oper folk to anger and to Ire [2319] ¶ And eek sire 3e moste dryue coueitise out of 3oure herte / [2320] ¶ For þapostil saith þat coueytise is roote of alle harmes. [2321] And trusteth wel þat a coueitous man ne can not deme ne þinke<sup>1</sup> but oonly to fulfille þe ende of his coueitise [2322] ¶ And certes þat may neuer ben accomplished ¶ For euer þe more abundaunce þat he hath of riches. þe more he desireth [2323] And sire 3e moste also dryue out of 3our herte hastynes. [2324] For certes 3e may nought deme for þe beste a sodein þou3t þat falleþ in 3oure herte ¶ But 3e moste auyse 3ou on it ful ofte [2325] ¶ For as 3e herde here biforn þe comune prouerbe is þis: þat he þat soone demeth soone repentith:

[2326] ¶ Sire 3e ben not alway in lik disposicioun [2327] For certis som þing þat som tyme semeþ to 3ow þat it is good for to doo: anoper tyme it semeþ to 3ou þe contrarie

[2328] whan 3e han taken counseil in 3oure seluen. and han demed by good deliberacioun such þing<sup>t</sup> as 3ow semest best<sup>t</sup> [2329] ¶ þanne rede I 3ou þat 3e kepe it secre. [2330] Bywreye nought 3oure counseil to no persone but it so be þat 3e wene sicurly that þurgh 3oure bywreyinge 3oure condicioun schal be to 3ow þe more profytable [2331] ¶ For Ihe Syrac saip ¶ Neiper to þi foo ne to þi freend discouere not<sup>t</sup> þy secre ne þy foly [2332] ¶ For þey wil 3iue 3ou audience and lokyng<sup>t</sup> and supportacioun in þi presence and scorn in thin absence [2333] ¶ anoper clerk<sup>t</sup> saip þat<sup>t</sup> skarsly schalt<sup>t</sup> þou fynde eny persone þat may kepe counseil secreely [2334] ¶ The book<sup>t</sup> saith ¶ whil þou kepist<sup>t</sup> þi counsail in þin herte þou kepest<sup>t</sup> it in þi prisoun [2335] ¶ and whan þou bywreyst<sup>t</sup> þi counseil to any wight<sup>t</sup>: he holdeþ þe in his snare [2336] ¶ And þerfore 3ow is better hyde 3oure counseil in 3oure herte þan prayen him to whom 3e haue bywryed 3oure counseil þat<sup>t</sup> he wol kepe it clos and stille [2337] ¶ For Seneca seith ¶ If so be þat<sup>t</sup> þou ne maist<sup>t</sup> not þin owne counsel hyde<sup>t</sup>: how darst<sup>t</sup> þou preven any oper wight<sup>t</sup> þi counseil secreely to kepe<sup>t</sup>: [2338] ¶ But napeles if þou wene securly þat<sup>t</sup> þy bywreying<sup>t</sup> of þy counsel to a persone wol make þy condicioun stonde in þe better plite<sup>t</sup>: þanne schalt<sup>t</sup> þou telle him þy counsel in þis wise [2339] ¶ First<sup>t</sup> þou shalt<sup>t</sup> make no semblaunt wher þe were leuer werre or pees. or þis or þat. ne schewe him not<sup>t</sup> þi wille and þin entent<sup>t</sup>. [2340] For truste wel þat comunly þese counseilours ben flaterers [2341] and namely þe counselours of grete lordes [2342] ¶ For þay enforcen hem alway raper to speke plesaunt wordes enclynyng<sup>t</sup> to þe lordes lust þan wordes þat been trewe and profitable [2343] ¶ And þerfore men say þat þe riche man hap selden good counseil. but if he haue it of him self<sup>t</sup> [2344] ¶ And after þat<sup>t</sup> þou schalt<sup>t</sup> consider þy frendes and þine enemyes. [2345] And as touching<sup>t</sup> þy frendes<sup>t</sup>: þou schalt<sup>t</sup> con-

sidere which of hem beþ most faithful and most wise and eldest and most approuyd in counsaylinge [2346] ¶ And of hem schalt þou axe þy counsail as þe caas<sup>1</sup> requireth

[2347] ¶ I say þat first 3e schul clepe to 3our counseil 3oure frendes that ben trewe [2348] ¶ For Salomon saip For right as þe hert of a man delitith in sauour þat is soote: Right so. þe conseil of trewe frendes 3eueþ swetnes to þe soule [2349] ¶ he saith also ther may no þing be likened to þe trewe freend [2350] ¶ For certes gold ne siluer beþ nought so moche worþ as þe goode wil of a trewe freend. [2351] ¶ And eek he sayde þat a trewe frend is a strong defens who þat it fyndeþ certes he fyndeþ a gret tresour [2352] ¶ þanne schul 3e eek considere if þat 3oure trewe frendes ben discrete and wyse For þe book saith. axe þi conseil alwey of hem þat ben wyse. [2353] and by þis same resoun shul 3e clepe to 3oure conseil of 3oure frendes þat ben of age suche as haue I-seye sightes and ben expert in many þinges and ben approuyd in counseylinges [2354] ¶ For þe book saith þat in olde men is þe sapience and in longe tyme þe prudence [2355] ¶ And tullius saip þat grete þinges ben not ay accompliced by strengþe ne by delyuernes of body: but by good conseil by auctorite of persones and by science. the whiche þre þinges ne been not feble by age: but certis þay enforsen and encresen day by day [2356] and thanne schul 3e kepe þis for a general reule ¶ First schul 3e clepe to 3oure conseil a fewe of 3oure frendes þat ben especial [2357] For Salomon saip ¶ Many frendes haue þou but among a þousand chese þe oon to be þy counseilour. [2358] For al be it so þat þou first ne telle þy conseil but to a fewe: þou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk if it be neede [2359] But loke alwey þat þy counseilours haue þilke þre condiciouns þat I haue sayd

[<sup>1</sup> leaf 211, back]

bifore þat is to say þat þay ben trewe and olde and of wys experiens [2360] ¶ And werke nouȝt alwey in euery neede by oon counseilour alloone ¶ For som tyme byhouep it be counseiled by many [2361] ¶ For Salomon saith ¶ Saluacioun of þinges is wher as þere beþ many counseilours.

[2362] Now siþ þat I haue told ȝow of which folk ȝe schul be counseled ¶ Now wil I telle ȝow which counseil ȝe ouȝt eschiewe. [2363] First ȝe schal espie þe counseil of fooles ¶ For Salomon seiþ take no counseil of a fool For he ne can not counseile but after his oughne lust and his affeccioun [2364] ¶ The book seiþ þat þe proprete of a fool is þis he trowep lightly harm of euery wight & lightly trowep alle bounte in himself [2365] ¶ Thow schalt eschiewe eek þe counseil of alle flaterers suche as enforcen hem rapere to prayse ȝoure persone by flaterie þan for to telle ȝow þe soþfastnesse of þinges

[2366] ¶ wherfore Tullius saith Amonges alle pestilences þat <sup>1</sup>ben in frendschipe þat is þe grettest flaterie. ¶ And þerfore is it more neede þat þou eschiewe and drede flaterers more þan eny oþer peple [2367] ¶ The book seiþ. þou schalt raper drede and flee fro þe swete wordes of flaterers. þen fro þe egre wordes of þy frend þat seiþ þe þi soþes [2368] ¶ Salamon seiþ þat þe wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacche in Innocentȝ [2369] ¶ He seiþ also. he þat spekep to his frend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce setteþ a nette byfore his feet to cacchen him [2370] and þerfore seiþ Tullius ¶ Encline not þin eeres to flaterers ne tak no confort of þe wordes of flaterers [2371] ¶ And Catoun seiþ Auyse the wel and eschiewe wordes of swetnes and of plesaunce [2372] and eek þou schalt eschiewe þe counselyng of þin olde enemyes þat ben recounsiled. [2373] þe book seiþ. that wight retorneth soone in to þe

grace of his olde enemyes [2374] ¶ And ysope saith. Ne  
 truste not to hem wip which þou hast had som tyme werre  
 or enmyte. ne telle not hem þy counseil [2375] And  
 Seneca telleþ þe cause why it may not be saith he  
 þat wher as a greet fuyr haþ longe tyme endured: þat  
 þere ne leueþ som vapour of hete [2376] ¶ And  
 perfore saith Salomon ¶ In þin olde enemy truste þou neuere  
 [2377] ¶ For sicurly þough þin enemy be reconsiled  
 and make þe cheer of humilite and lowteþ to þe  
 his heed: ne trist him neuer [2378] For certes  
 he makip þilke feyned humilite more for his profyt  
 þan for eny loue of þi persone by cause he dem-  
 yth to haue victorie ouer þi persone ¶ By such feyned  
 countynaznce the whiche victorie he might nouzt haue by  
 stryf and werre [2379] ¶ And Petir Alfons saip ¶ Make no  
 felaschipe with þine olde enemyes. for if þou do hem  
 bounte: þey wil peruerten it in to wikkednes  
 [2380] & eek þou most eschiewe þe counseilynge of hem  
 þat ben þy seruauntz and beren þe gret reuerence. For  
 þur auenture þai say it more for drede þan for loue  
 [2381] And perfore saith a philosopre in þis  
 wise ¶ Ther is no wight parfytly trewe to him þat he to  
 sore dredeth [2382] ¶ And Tullius saith ¶ þer is no  
 wight so gret of eny emperour þat onge may endure  
 but if he haue more loue of þe peple than drede  
 [2383] ¶ Thow also eschiewe þe counseil of folk  
 þat ben dronkelewe For þay ne can no counsel hyde  
 [2384] ¶ For Salomon saith ¶ Ther regneþ no priuete þer as  
 is dronkenesse [2385] ¶ þe schul also haue in suspect  
 þe counseil of such folk as counseileþ þou oon þing  
 priuely and counseile þow þe contrarie openly [2386]  
 ¶ For Cassiodorie saith it is a maner sleighte to  
 hindre whan he schewip to doon oon þing openly and  
 werkith priuely þe contrarie. [2387] ¶ þou schalt also  
 eschiewe þe counseil of wikked folkes ¶ For þe  
 book saith. ¶ The counselyng of wikked folk is alway ful

of fraude [2388] ¶ and Daudid saith ¶ Blisful is þat man  
þat hap not folwed þe counseilyng of wikked men or  
schrewes [2389] ¶ Thow schalt also eschiewe þe counseilynge  
of 3onge folkes for here conseil is nought/ rype

[2390] ¶ Now sire syn I haue schewed 3ou of what folk  
3e schul take 3oure counsail and of whiche folk 3e schullen  
folwe þe conseil [2391] ¶ Now schal I teche 3ow how 3e  
schul examyne 3oure conseil after þe doctrine of tullius  
[2392] ¶ In the examynyng of 3oure conseiloures:  
3e schul considre many þinges [2393] ¶ Al-thir first 3e  
schul considre þat in þilke þing that þou proposit  
and vp what þing þou wilt haue conseil that verray  
trouthe be sayd and considerid. þis is to sayn. telle  
trewely þy tale [2394] ¶ For he þat saith fals may not  
wel be counseled in þat cas of which he lyeth [2395]  
¶ And after þis þou schalt considere the þinges þat  
accorden to þat purpos. for to do by þy conseil  
if resoun accorde þer to [2396] ¶ and eek if þy  
might may accorde þer to. and if þe more part and þe  
better part of þy conseilours accorde þer-to or noon  
[2397] ¶ Thanne schalt þou considere what þing schal  
folwe of þat counsailynge. as hate. pees. werre.  
grace. profyt/. or damage and many oþer þinges  
[2398] ¶ And in alle þese þinges þou schalt chese  
þe beste and weyue alle oþer þinges [2399] þanne  
schalt þou considre of what roote engendred is þy matier  
of þy conseil and what fruyt may conserue and  
engendre / [2400] ¶ Thow schalt also consider alle þese  
causes from whens þai ben sprongen. / [2401] And  
whan 3e haue examined 3oure conseil as I haue said  
and which party is þe better and more profitable and  
han approued by many wise folkes and olde: [2402]  
Than schalt thow considre if þou maist performe it and  
make of it a good ende [2403] ¶ For resoun wol nought  
þat any man schuld bygynne a thing: but if he mighte  
parforme it and make þer-of a good ende. [2404] ne no wight

schulde take vpon him so heuy a charge þat he mighte not  
 bere it [2405] ¶ For þe prouerbe seiþ ¶ He þat moche  
 embrasith destroyeþ litel [2406] ¶ And Catoun seiþ  
 Assay to do such þing as þou hast power to doon.  
 lest þat þy charge oppresse þe so sore. þat þe  
 bihoue to wayue þing þat þou hast bygonne  
 [2407] ¶ And if so be þat þou be in doubte<sup>1</sup> wher þou  
 maist parforme a þing or noon chese rather to suffre  
 þan bygynne [2408] ¶ And petre alfons saith If  
 þou hast might to doon a þing of which þou most  
 repente it is better nay þan yee / [2409] þis is  
 to sayn þat þe is better holde þy tongue stille þan  
 to speke [2410] ¶ Than may 3e vnderstonde by  
 strengre resouns. þat if þou hast power to parforme a  
 werk of which þou schalt repente þanne is it better  
 þat þou suffre þan bigynne. [2411] wel seyn þay þat  
 defenden euery wight to assaie þing of which he is  
 in doute wheþir he may parforme it or noon [2412]  
 ¶ And after whan 3e han examyned 3oure counseil as I  
 haue sayd biforn and knowen wel 3e may par-  
 forme 3oure emprise conferme it þanne sadly til it be at  
 an ende

[2413] ¶ Now is it tyme and resoun þat I schewe 3ow  
 whanne and wherfore þat 3e may chaunge 3oure coun-  
 seil wipouten reproef / [2414] ¶ Sothly a man  
 may chaunge his purpos and his counseil if þe cause  
 cesseþ or whan a newe cause bytydeþ [2415] ¶ For þe  
 lawe seiþ ¶ vpon þinges þat newly bitydeþ bihoueþ  
 newe counseil. [2416] and Seneca seiþ ¶ If þy counseil  
 be comen to þe eeres of þin enemy: chaunge þy counsail  
 [2417] ¶ Thow maist/ also chaunge þy counseil if so be  
 þat þou fynde þat by errour or by oþer  
 processe harm or damage may bytyde [2418] ¶ Also  
 þou chaunge þy counseil if þay be dishonest or elles  
 comuneth of dishoneste. [2419] For þe lawes sayn ¶ That  
 alle þe hestes þat ben dishoneste ben of no valieu

[2420] and eek' if it so be þat it be impossible. or may not' goodly be parformed or kept'

[2421] and take þis for a general reule ¶ That euery counseil þat' is affermed or strengþed so strongly þat' it may not be chaunged for no condicioun þat' may bitide ¶ I say þat. þilke counseil is wikked

[2422] ¶ þis melibeus whan he had herd þe doctrine of his wyf' dame prudens answerde in þis wise [2423] ¶ Dame quod he ȝit as in to þis tyme ȝe han wel and couenably taught' me as in general how I schal gouerne me in chesyng and in wiþholdyng of my counseiloures [2424] ¶ But' now wold I fayn ȝe wolde condescende as in especial [2425] & telleþ me what' semep or how likeþ ȝow by oure counseiloures þat' we han chosen in oure present neede

[2426] ¶ My lord quod sche I byseke ȝow in al humblesce þat' ȝe wil not' wilfully repplye aȝeinst' my resouns ne distempre ȝoure herte þough I say or speke þing' þat' ȝow displesith [2427] ¶ For god woot' þat' as in myn entent' I speke it for ȝoure beste. for ȝoure honour. and for ȝour<sup>1</sup> profyt' eek [2428] ¶ And soþly I hope þat ȝour benignite wol take it in to pacience [2429] ¶ For trustep me wel quod sche þat' ȝoure counseil as in þis caas ne schulde not as for to speke propurly be called a counseilyng': but / a mocoun or a moeuyng of foly [2430] in which counseil ȝe han erred in many a sondry wise

[2431] ¶ First and forward ȝe han erred in þe gaderyng' of ȝoure counseilours [2432] For ȝe schulde first han cleped a fewe folkes [ . . . . . ]  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.* if it hadde be neede [2433] ¶ But' certes ȝe han sodeinly cleped to ȝour counseil a gret' multitude of poeple ful cha[r]geous and ful anoyous for to hiere [2434] ¶ Also ȝe han erred for þer as ȝe schulde oonly haue clepid to ȝoure counseil ȝoure trewe frendes olde and wise: [2435] ȝe haue I-cleped straunge folk' ȝonge folk'. false flatereres and enemyes



reconsiled and folk<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> doon 3ow reuerence wipoute  
loue [2436] ¶ Eke also 3e han erred<sup>t</sup>: For 3e han  
brou3t<sup>t</sup> with 3ow to 3oure counseil. Ire. Coueitise and  
Hastynes. [2437] þe whiche þre þinges ben contra-  
rious to euery counsail honest<sup>t</sup> and profitable [2438] ¶ The  
whiche þre þinges 3e haue nought<sup>t</sup> annentissched or destroyed  
neyþer in 3oure self<sup>t</sup> ne in 3oure conseiloures as 3e oughte  
[2439] ¶ Also 3e haue erred. For 3e haue schewed to 3oure  
conseilours 3oure talent<sup>t</sup> and 3oure affeccoun<sup>t</sup> to make  
werre and for to doon vengeance anon [2440] ¶ þay han  
espyed by 3oure wordes to what þinge 3e ben enclined  
[2441] and þefore haue þay counseiled 3ow rather to  
3oure talent þan to 3oure profyt [2442] ¶ 3e haue erred  
also<sup>t</sup>: For it semep þat<sup>t</sup> 3ow sufficeþ to haue been coun-  
seiled by þese conseilours only and wip litel auys  
[2443] wher-as in so gret<sup>t</sup> and so heigh a neede it hadde  
be necessarious mo conseilours and more deliberacioun to  
parforme 3oure emprise [2444] 3e haue erred also ¶ For  
[ . . . . . ]  
. . . . . [2445] . . .  
. . . . . *no gap*] 3e haue maked no diuisioun bytwixe  
3oure counsailours þis is to seyn bitwix 3oure  
frendes and 3oure feyned conseilours. [2446] ne 3e ne haue  
nought I-knowe þe wille of 3oure frendes olde and wise.  
[2447] But 3e haue cast alle here wordes in an hochepoche /  
and enclyned 3oure herte to þe more part and to þe  
gretter nombre and þere be 3e condescendid [2448]  
¶ And syn 3e wot wel men schal alway fynde a  
gretter nombre of fooles þan of wyse men<sup>t</sup>: [2449] and  
þefore þe counsailes þat ben at congregaciouns and mul-  
titudes of folk<sup>t</sup>. þer as men taken more reward to þe  
<sup>1</sup>nombre þan to þe sapience of persones. [2450] 3e se wel  
þat<sup>t</sup> in suche counseilynges fooles haue maystrie [2451]  
¶ Melibeus answerde agayn and sayde ¶ I graunte wel þat<sup>t</sup>  
I haue erred<sup>t</sup>: [2452] But þere as þou hast<sup>t</sup> told me  
toforþ þat<sup>t</sup> he is nought<sup>t</sup> to blame þat<sup>t</sup> changeþ his coun-

seilours in certeyn caas and for certeyn iuste causes  
 [2453] ¶ I am al redy to chaunge my counseilours right  
 as þou wilt deuyse [2454] ¶ The prouerbe saith þat  
 for to do synne is mannysch. But/ certes for to perseuere  
 longe in synne is werk of þe deuyt

[2455] ¶ To þis sentence anon answerde dame pru-  
 dens and saide [2456] ¶ Examineth quod sche þoure coun-  
 sail and let vs se which of hem hap spoke  
 most resonably and taught þou best counsail [2457]  
 And for as moche as þe examinacioun is necessarie:  
 let vs byginne at þe Surgiens and at þe phisiciens þat  
 first speken in þis matiere [2458] ¶ I say þou þat þe  
 surgiens and þe physiciens han sayd þow in þoure conseil  
 discretly as hem ought [2459] and in here speche  
 sayden ful wisely þat to þe office of hem appendith to  
 doon to euery wight honour and profyt. and no wight  
 to annoye [2460] and after here craft to do gret diligence  
 vn to þe cure of hem which þat þay haue in here govern-  
 aunce [2461] And sire right as þay answerde  
 wisely and discretly: [2462] Right so rede I þat þay  
 be heihly and soueraignly guerdoned for here noble  
 speche / [2463] and eek for þey schullen do þe more  
 ententyf besynes in þe curyng of þoure douȝter dere  
 [2464] ¶ For al be it so þat þai be þoure frendes:  
 þerfore schul þe nought suffre þat þay schul serue þow for  
 nouȝt / [2465] But þe oughte þe rapere to guerdoune hem and  
 schewe hem þoure largesse [2466] ¶ & as touchynge þe  
 proposiciouns whiche þe phisiciens han schewed þou in þis  
 caas þis is to sayn [2467] þat in maladyes oon  
 contrarie is warissed by anoper contrarie. [2468] I  
 wolde fayn knowe þilke text and how þay vnderstonde it and  
 what is þoure entente [2469] ¶ Certes quod Melibeus  
 vnderstonden it is in þis wise [2470] þat right as þay han  
 do me a contrarie: right so schold I do hem anoper  
 [2471] ¶ For right as þai han venged hem on me and  
 doon me wrong: Right so schal I venge me vp on hem

and doon hem wrong [2472] and þanne haue I cured oon contrarie by anoþer

[2473] ¶ lo lo quod Dame prudence how lightly is euery man enclyned to his oughne plesaunce and to his oughne desir [2474] ¶ Certes quod sche þe wordes of þe phisiciens<sup>1</sup> ne schulde nouȝt haue ben vnderstonde sone in þat wise [2475] ¶ For certes wikkednesse is no contrarie to wickednesse. ne vengauns to vengeaunce. ne wrong to wrong: but þai ben semblable [2476] And þefore on vengeaunce is nouȝt warrished by anoþer vengeaunce. ne oon wrong by anoþer wrong. [2477] but euerych of hem encreseth and engreggith oþer [2478] ¶ But certes þe wordes of þe phisiciens schul ben vnderstonde in þis wise. [2479] For good and wikkednesse ben tuo contraries. and pees and werre. vengeaunce & sufferance. Discord and accord and many oþer þinges [2480] ¶ but certes wikkednes schal be warrished by goodnesse. Discord by accord. werre by pees and so forth of oþer þinges [2481] ¶ And her-to accordith seint paul þe apostil in many places [2482] ¶ He saith. ne ȝeldith nouȝt harm for harm. ne wikked speche for wikked speche [2483] ¶ But do wel to him þat doþ þe harm and blesse him that doþ þe harm [2484] and in many oþer places he amonesteth pees and accord [2485] ¶ But now wil I speke to ȝow of þe counseil which was ȝiue to ȝow by þe men of lawe & þe wise folkes [2486] þat sayde alle by oon accord as ȝe haue herd byfore [2487] That ouer alle þinges ȝe schal do ȝoure diligence to kepe ȝoure persone and to warmstore ȝoure hous. [2488] and seyden also þat in þis ȝow aughte for to wirche ful auysily and with gret deliberacioun. [2489] ¶ And sire as to þe firste poynt þat touched to þe kepinge of ȝoure persone: [2490] ȝe schul vnderstonde. þat he þat hap werre: schal enermore deuoutly and mekely prayen biforn alle þinges [2491] þat Ihū crist wil of his mercy

haue him in his proteccioun and ben his souerayn helpyng  
 at his neede / [2492] ¶ For certes in þis world þer nys no  
 wight þat may be counseiled or kept sufficaun[t]ly wip-  
 oute þe kepinge of oure lord ihū crist [2493] ¶ To þis  
 sentence accordeþ þe prophete Dauid þat seith [2494]  
 ¶ If god ne kepe not þe citee . in ydel wakith he þat kepith  
 hit [2495] ¶ Now sire þanne schul 3e committe þe kepinge of  
 3oure persone to 3oure trewe frendes þat ben approued  
 and y-knowe [2496] and of hem schul 3e axen help 3oure  
 persone to kepe ¶ For Catoun saith ¶ If þou haue  
 neede of help: axe it of þy freendes . [2497] For þer is  
 noon so good a phisicien at neede: as is a trewe frend .  
 [2498] ¶ And after þis: þan schal 3e kepe 3ou fro alle  
 straunge folkes and fro lyeres and haue alway in suspect/  
 here compaignye [2499] ¶ For Pieres alfons saith ¶ Ne  
 take no compaignie by the <sup>1</sup>way of a straunge man . but/  
 so be þat þou knowe him of a lenger tyme [2500]  
 And if so be he falle in to þy compaignye par  
 auenture wipouten þin assent: [2501] enquere þanne  
 as subtilly as þou maist of his conuersacioun and of his lyf  
 bifore and feyne þy way and say þat þou wilt go þider  
 as þou wolt nought goon [2502] ¶ And if he bere a spere  
 ¶ hold þe on the right syde ¶ And if he bere a sword:  
 holde þe on þe lyft syde . [2503] and so after þis .  
 þanne schul 3e kepe 3ou wisely from al such  
 peple as I haue sayd bifore / and hem and here conseil  
 eschiewe [2504] ¶ And after þis . þanne schul 3e kepe 3ow  
 in such manere [2505] þat for eny presumpcioun of 3oure  
 strengþe þat 3e despise not þe  
 might of 3oure aduersarie so lite þat 3e lete þe  
 kepinge of 3oure persone for 3oure presumpcioun . [2506]  
 For eny wis man dredeþ his enemy [2507] ¶ And  
 Salomon saith ¶ weleful is he þat of alle hap drede .  
 [2508] For certes he þat þurgh hardynes of his  
 herte and þurgh þe hardinesse of himself . hap to  
 gret presumpcioun: him schal euyl bitide [2509] ¶ þanne

schal 3e euermore counterwayte enbusshementz and alle  
 espiaillē [2510] ¶ For Senec saith þat þe wise man  
 þat dredip harmes / eschiewith harmes. [2511] ne he ne  
 fallip in to noone perils þat perils eschiewep [2512] ¶ And al  
 be it so þat þe seme þat þou art in sikur place: 3it  
 schaltow alway do þy diligence in kepyng of þy persone  
 [2513] ¶ This is to say ¶ Be not neglilent to kepe þy  
 persone nought oonly for þy gretteste enemyes: but fro þy  
 lest enemyes [2514] ¶ Senec saith ¶ A man þat is  
 wel auysed: he dredip his lest enemy [2515] ¶ Ovide  
 seiþ þat þe litel wesil wol sle þe grete bole and þe  
 wilde hert. [2516] ¶ And þe book seiþ. a litel þorn  
 wol prikke a þing ful sore. ¶ And an hound wol  
 holde þe wilde boore [2517] ¶ But napeles I say not þat  
 3e schul be so moche a coward þat 3e doute where is no  
 neede or drede [2518] ¶ þe book seiþ þat som folk haue  
 gret lust to disceyue ¶ but 3it þay dreden hem to be de-  
 ceyned [2519] ¶ 3et schal 3e drede to ben empoisoned  
 ¶ And kepe þe fro þe companye of scorers [2520]  
 For þe book saith with scorers make no compaignye  
 but flee hem and here wordes as venym

[2521] ¶ Now as to þe secounde poynt where as 3oure  
 wise counseilours warnede 3ow to warmstore 3oure hous  
 with gret diligence: [2522] I wolde fayn wite <sup>1</sup>how þat  
 3e vnderstoode þilke wordes what is 3oure sentence

[2523] ¶ Melibeus answerde and saide ¶ Certes I ynder-  
 stonde it in þis wise þat I schal warmstore myn hous  
 with toures suche as han castiles and oper maner  
 edifices and armure and artilries [2524] by suche  
 þinges I may my persone & myn hous so kepen and  
 edifiē and defenden þat myn enemyes schul be in drede myn  
 hous to approche

[2525] ¶ To þis sentence answerde dame prudence  
 ¶ warmstorynge quod sche of heihe toures and grete  
 edifices [ . . . . . [2526] . . .  
 . . . . . no gap] wiþ grete

costages and gret trauaile and whan þat þay ben  
 accomplished 3it beþ þay nouȝt worth a straw but if þey be  
 defended by trewe frendes þat beþ olde and wise [2527]  
 ¶ And vnderstondeþ þat þe gretteſt strength or  
 garnisoun that þe riche man may haue as wel to kepe his  
 persone as his goodes is [2528] þat he be biloued  
 wiþ his subgites and wiþ his neighebouris [2529] ¶ For  
 þus saith tullius ¶ That þer is a maner garnisoun þat  
 no man may venquiſſhe ne diſcomfite and þat is [2530]  
 a lord to be biloued with his citeȝeins and of his peple

[2531] ¶ Now þanne as to ȝoure þridde poynt where as  
 ȝoure olde and wyſe counſeillours ſayde. ȝe  
 oughte nouȝt ſodeinly ne haſtily procede in þis neede.  
 [2532] but þat ȝe oughte purueyen ȝow and apparaile ȝow  
 in þis caas wiþ gret diligence and gret deliberacioun.  
 [2533] trewely I trowe þat þay ſayden ſoþ and  
 right wiſely [2534] ¶ For Tullius ſaith ¶ In euery  
 nede er þou bigynne it/ apparaile þe wiþ gret  
 diligence [2535] ¶ Thaune ſay I þat in vengeance  
 takinge in werre in bataile and in warmſtoringe of þin hous  
 [2536] er þou bygynne I rede þat þou apparaile þe  
 þerto and do it with gret deliberacioun. [2537] For  
 tullius ſaith ¶ That long apparaylyng byfore þe bataille  
 makeþ ſhort victorie [2538] ¶ And Caſſidorus ſaiþ ¶ The  
 garnisoun is ſtrenger whan it is long tyme auysed

[2539] ¶ But now let vs ſpeke of þe counſeil þat was  
 accorded by ȝoure neighebouris ſuche as doon ȝou  
 reuerence wiþoute loue. [2540] ¶ ȝoure olde enemyes recoun-  
 ſiled [2541] þat counſeile ȝow cer-  
 teyn þinges pryuely and openly counſeile ȝow þe  
 contrarie [2542] ¶ þe ȝonge alſo þat counſaile  
 ȝow to make werre and venge ȝow anon [2543] ¶ And  
 certes ſire as I haue ſayd byforn ȝe haue gretly erred  
 to haue cleþed ſuch maner folk to ȝoure counſeil [2544]  
 whiche be now repreued by þe reſouns  
 byfore ſayd [2545] ¶ But napeles let vs now descende to

þe purpose special ¶ 3e schul first procede after þe doctrine of  
Tullius [2546] ¶ Certes þe troupe of þis or  
þis counseil nedep nought diligently enquire [2547] For it  
is wel wist which it ben þat doon to 3ow þis  
trespas and vilonye [2548] & how many trespasoures  
and in what maner þay han to 3ow doon al þis  
wrong and al þis vilonye [2549] ¶ And after þat  
schul 3e examyne þe secounde condicioun which  
Tullius addip þer to in þis matier [2550]  
¶ Tullius put a þing which þat he clepeth couetyng. þis  
is to sayn [2551] who ben þay and which ben þay and how  
many þat consentid to þis matiere and to þy counsail in þy  
wilfulnesse to do hasty vengeaunces [2552] & let vs considere  
also who ben þo and how many ben þo [ . . . . .  
. . . *no gap*] þat ben conseilours to 3oure aduersaries. [2553]  
and certes as to þe first poynt it is wel knowen which  
folk ben þay þat consentid to 3oure first wilful-  
nes. [2554] For trewly alle þo þat counsailed 3ow  
to make sodeyn werre bep nou3t 3oure frendes [2555]  
¶ let vs considre which ben þo þat 3e holde  
so gretly 3oure frendes as to 3oure persone [2556] ¶ For  
al be it so þat 3e be mighty and riche: certes 3e  
been alloone: [2557] for certes 3e haue no childe  
but a dou3ter. [2558] ne 3e haue no breþeren ne cosins  
germayns ne noon oper neigh kynrede / [2559] wherfore  
þat 3oure enemyes for drede schulden stynte for to plede wip  
3ou and stryue 3oure persone [2560] ¶ 3e knowe  
also þat 3oure riches mooten in diuers parties  
be departed. [2561] and whan euery wight hap  
his part: þay wol take but litel reward to venge  
þy deth [2562] ¶ But þyne enemyes ben þre and  
haue many children breþeren. cosynes and opere neigh  
kynrede. [2563] and þough it so were 3e hadde  
slayn of hem tuo or thre: 3et dwellen þere ynowe to wreke  
here deth and sle þi persone [2564] ¶ And þough so  
were þat 3oure kynrede were more sekir and stedefast þan

þe kynrede of ȝoure aduersaries: [2565] ȝit napeles ȝoure  
 kynrede nis but litel kinrede and litel sib  
 to ȝow [2566] and þe kyn of ȝoure enemyes ben neigh sibbe  
 to hem. and certes as in þat here condicioun is bet þan  
 ȝoures [2567] ¶ þanne let vs considere also if þe  
 counseilynge of hem þat counseiled ȝow to take sodein  
 vengeance wheþir it accorde to resoun [2568] &  
 certes ȝe knowe wel nay [2569] ¶ For as by right and  
 resoun þer may no man take vengeance vpon no wight but  
 þe Iugge þat/ haþ iurediccoun of it [2570] whan it is  
 y-graunted him to take þilke vengeance hastily or at-  
 temperelly as þe lawe requireth. [2571] and ȝit more-  
 ouer of þilke word þat Tullius clepith consentynge  
 [2572] þou schalt considre if þy might and þy power  
 may consente and suffice to þy wilfulnes and to þy  
 counselours. [2573] and certes þou maist/ wel say  
 þat nay / [2574] For sicurly as for to speke properly  
 we may doo no þing but oonly oon þing/ which we may  
 do rightfully [2575] ¶ And certes rightfully may ȝe  
 take no vengeance as of ȝoure owne auctorite [2576]  
 ¶ Than may ȝe se þat ȝoure power consentith  
 not ne accordith not wip ȝoure wilfulnesse [2577] ¶ let  
 vs now examyne þe þridde poynt þat Tullius clepeth  
 consequente. [2578] þou schalt vnderstonde þat þe  
 vengeance þat þou purposiddest for to take is conse-  
 quent. [2579] and þer of folweth anoper vengeance.  
 peril and werre and oper damages wipoute nombre  
 of whiche we be not war as at þis tyme [2580] ¶ And  
 as touching þe fourþe poynt that tullius clepeth en-  
 gendrynge: [2581] þou schalt considre þat þis wrong  
 which þat is doon to þe is engendred of þe hate of  
 þin enemyes [2582] and of þe vengeance takinge vp  
 þat wolde engendre anoper vengeance & moche sorwe  
 and wastyng of riches as I sayde

[2583] ¶ Now sire as to þe poynt þat Tullius  
 clepith causes whiche þat þe laste poynt [2584] þou



schalt vnderstonde þat þe wrong þat þou hast receyued  
 haþ certeyn causes [2585] whiche þat clerkes calle  
 Orience and Officiene. and causa longinqua. and causa  
 propinqua. þis is to say. þe fer cause. and þe neigh  
 cause. [2586] for þe fer cause is almighty god þat is  
 cause of alle þinges. [2587] þe nere cause is þe  
 þre enemyes. [2588] þe cause accidental was hate.  
 [2589] þe causes materiales been þe fyue woundes of  
 þy doughter. [2590] the cause formal is þe maner of  
 here werkyng þat brought in laddres and clombe in at  
 þin wyndowes. [2591] þe cause final was for to sle þy  
 doughter hit letted nouȝt in as moche as was in hem [2592]  
 ¶ But for to speke of þe fer cause as to what ende þay  
 schal come or what schal finally betyde of hem in þis  
 cause. can I not deme but by comittyng and by  
 supposyng. [2593] For we schul suppose þat þay schul  
 come to a wikked ende [2594] by cause þat þe book  
 of degrees saith ¶ Seelden or wiþ gret peyne ben causes  
 I-brought to <sup>1</sup>a good ende. whan þay ben euyl bygonne

[2595] Now sire if men wolde axe me why þat  
 ȝe suffrede men to do ȝow þis wrong and vilonye? Certes I  
 can not wel answere as for no soþfastnes [2596] For  
 þe apostil saith. þat þe sciences and þe Iuggements of  
 oure lord god almyghty ben ful deepe [2597] ¶ Ther may  
 no man comprehendene ne serchen hem sufficiantly [2598]  
 ¶ Natheles by certeyn presumpciouns and coniectinges  
 I holde and bilieue [2599] þat god which þat is ful of  
 iustice and of rightwisnesse haþ suffred þis to betyde by  
 iuste cause resonable

[2600] ¶ Thy name Melibe is to say a man  
 þat drynkeþ hony. [2601] þou hast y-dronke so moche  
 hony of sweete temperel riches and delices and hon-  
 ours of þis world [2602] þat þou art dronke and  
 hast forȝete Ihū crist þy creatour. [2603] þou  
 hast not doon him such honour and reuerence as þe  
 oughte to doone. [2604] ne þou hast nouȝt wel taken keep to

þe wordes of Ovide þat saith [2605] ¶ vnder þe hony  
of þy goodes of þy body is hid þe venym þat sleep  
þi soule [2606] ¶ And Salomon saith ¶ If þou haue  
fouunde hony. etc of it þat sufficeþ. [2607] For if þou  
ete of it out of mesure: þou schalt spewe and be nedy  
and pouere. [2608] and peraventure crist hap þe in  
despit. and hath torned away fro þe his face and his  
eeres of misericorde [2609] ¶ And also he hap suffred  
þat þou hast ben punysshed in þe maner þat þou  
hast I-trespased [2610] ¶ Thou hast doon synne azeinst  
oure lord crist. [2611] for certes þi þre enemyes of man-  
kinde þat is to say þy flessch þe feend and þe  
world. [2612] þou hast y-suffred hem to entre in to þin  
herte wilfully by þe wyndow of þy body [2613] and  
hast nouȝt defended þiself sufficiently agayns here ascentis  
and here temptaciouns So þat þay haue woundid þi  
soule in fyue places [2614] This is to sayn þe dedly  
synnes þat ben entred in to þin herte by þy fyue  
wyndowes [2615] ¶ And in þe same maner oure lord crist  
hath wolde and suffred þat þy þre enemyes ben entred  
in to þin hous by þo wyndowes [2616] and haue  
I-woundid þi doughter in þe forsayde maner

[2617] ¶ Certes quod Melibeus I se wel þat ȝe en-  
force ȝow moche by wordes to ouercome me. in such  
manere þat I schal not venge me on myn enemyes [2618]  
schewynge me þe perils and þe yueles þat mighten  
falle of þis vengeaunce [2619] ¶ But who-so wolde considre  
in alle vegeaunces þe periles and þe yueles þat mighten folwe  
of vengeaunces takynge. [2620] a man wolde neuer take  
vengeaunce and þat were harm. [2621] For by venge-  
aunce takynge be <sup>1</sup>wikked men destruyed and disseuered fro  
þe goode men. [2622] and þay þat haue wille to wikked-  
nes restreignen here wikked purpos whan þay seen þe  
punysshynge and þe chastisyng of trespasours [2623]

[ . . . . .  
. . . . .

[<sup>1</sup> *leu/ 217, back*]

[2624] . . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.]*

[2625] ¶ And ȝit say I more þat right so as a sengle  
 persone synnep in taking of vengeaunce: [2626]  
 Right so þe Iugge synnep if he doo no vengeaunce  
 on him þat it hap deserued [2627] ¶ For Senec saith  
 þus ¶ he þat maister is he saith good to reproue schrewes  
 [2628] And as Cassoder saith ¶ A man dredeþ to doon  
 outrage whan he woot and knoweþ þat it displeseþ  
 to þe Iugges and þe soueraynes. [2629] and anoþer saith ¶ The  
 Iugge þat dredeþ to demen right makeþ schrewes //  
 [2630] And seint poul pappostoil saith in his epistil  
 whan he writeþ to þe romayns ¶ The Iugges bere  
 not þe spere wipoute cause. [2631] but þay beren it  
 to punysshē þe schrewes and mys doers and for to defende  
 wip þe goode men. [2632] If ȝe wol take vengeaunce  
 on ȝoure enemyes ȝe schul retourne or haue recours  
 to þe Iugges þat haue iurediccioun vpon hem [2633]  
 and he schal pun[i]ssche hem as þe law axeþ and requireþ

[2634] ¶ A quod melibeus þis vengeaunce likeþ me  
 no þing [2635] I byþenke me now and take heed  
 how fortune hap norissched me fro my childhode  
 and hap holpe me to passen many a strayt passage [2636]  
 ¶ Now wol I aske her þat sche schal wip goddes help  
 helpe me my schame for to venge

[2637] ¶ Certes quod prudence if ȝe wil wirche by my  
 counseil. ȝe schul not assaye fortune by no maner way [2638]  
 ne schul not lene ne bowe vnto hire after þe word of  
 Senec [2639] ¶ For þinges þat beþ folye and  
 þat beþ in hope of fortune schul neuer come to good  
 ende [2640] ¶ And as þe same Senek saip ¶ The more  
 cleer and þe more schynynge þat fortune is þe more  
 brutil and þe sonner brekeþ sche. [2641] so trusteþ nought  
 in hire For sche is nouȝt stedefast ne stable [2642] ¶ For  
 whan þou wenest or trowest to be most seur of hir

help. sche wol fayle þe and deceyue þe. [2643] And  
 wher as 3e say þat fortune hap norissched 3ow fro 3oure  
 childhode [2644] I say þat in so mochel 3e schul  
 þe lasse truste in hire and in hire witte [2645] ¶ For Senek  
 saith ¶ what man þat is norissched by fortune? sche makeþ  
 him to gret a fool [2646] ¶ Now sippe 3e desire  
 and axe vengeaunce and þe vengeaunce þat is doon [ . . .  
 . . . . . [2647]  
 . . . . . *no gap*] in hope of fortune is peril-  
 ous and vncerteyn [2648] þanne haueþ noon <sup>1</sup>oper  
 remedye but for to haue recours vnto þe soueraigne  
 Iugge þat vengith alle vilonies and wronges [2649]  
 and he schal venge 3ow after þat himself witnesseth  
 where as he saith [2650] ¶ leueþ þe ve[n]geaunce to me  
 and I schal 3elde it

[2651] ¶ Melibeus answerd. If I ne venge me nouȝt of  
 þe vilonye þat men haue doon vnto me. [2652] I schalsounere  
 warne hem þat han doon to me þat vilonye and alle  
 opere to doo me anoper vilonye [2653] For it is writen  
 ¶ Tak no vengeaunce of an old vilonye þou suf-  
 frest þin aduersarie do þe a newe vilonye. [2654]  
 and also for my suffraunce men wolde do me so  
 moche vilonye þat I mighte neither bere it ne sus-  
 teyne it. [2655] and so schulde I be put over  
 lowe [2656] For men say In moche sufferynge schal  
 many þinges falle vnto whiche þou schal nouȝt  
 mowe suffre

[2657] ¶ Certes quod prudence I graunte 3ow wel þat  
 ouer mochil suffraunce is nouȝt good: [2658] but 3it  
 folwip it nought þerof þat euery persone to whom men  
 doon vilonye take of it vengeaunce. [2659] For it apper-  
 tieneth and longeþ al oonly to þe Iugges. For þay schul  
 venge þe vilonyes and þe iniuries. [2660] and þerfore  
 þe auctoritees þat 3e haue sayd aboue been oonly  
 vnderstonden in þe Iugges [2661] ¶ For whan þay suffre  
 to mochil þe wronges and þe vilonyes that ben doon

wipoute punysshynge [2662] þay somne not a man  
 oonly to doo newe wronges: but þay comaunde hit.  
 [2663] also þe wise man saith ¶ The Iugge þat correct-  
 eth not þe synnere comaundith him and byddith him doon  
 anoper synne [2664] ¶ And þe Iugges and souereignes mighten  
 in here lond so mochil suffren of þe schrewes and mys-doeres  
 [2665] þat þay schulde by such suffraunce by proces of  
 tyme wexen of such power and might þat þay schulde  
 put out þe Iugges and þe souereignes from here places  
 [2666] & atte laste do hem lese here lordschipes

[2667] But lete vs now putte þat 3e han leue to  
 venge 3ow. [2668] I say 3e ben nou3t of might ne  
 power as now to venge 3ou [2669] ¶ For if he wolde make  
 comparisoun as to þe might ¶ Of 3oure aduersaries 3e schulde  
 fynde in many þinges þat I haue I-schewed 3ow er þis  
 þat here condicioun is better þan 3oures [2670] And  
 þerfore say I þat it is good as now þat 3e suffre and  
 be pacient

[2671] ¶ Forþermore 3e knowe þat after <sup>1</sup>þe  
 comune sawe it is a woodnesse a man to stryue with a  
 strengier or a more mighty man þan him-seluen is  
 [2672] And for to stryue wip a man of euene strengþe  
 þat is to say with as strong a man as he is. it is peril.  
 [2673] and for to stryue with a weykere it is folye  
 [2674] and þerfore schulde a man fle stryuyng as  
 moche as he mighte [2675] ¶ For Salomon seith ¶ It is a  
 gret worschipe a man to kepe him fro noyse and  
 stryf [2676] ¶ And if it so bifalle or happe þat a man  
 of gretter might and strengthe þan þou art do þe  
 greuaunce [2677] stude and busye þe rapier to stille  
 þe same greuaunce þan for to venge þe [2678] ¶ For  
 Senec saith. he putteþ him in a gret peril þat  
 stryueþ wip a gretter man þan he himseluen is [2679]  
 ¶ And Catoun saith ¶ If a man of heiher estat or degre or  
 more mighty þen þou do þe anoper grienaunce:  
 Suffre him. [2680] For he þat hap oones don þe a grienaunce

may anoþer tyme relieue þe and helpe þe. [2681] 3iþ sette I a caas 3e haue bothe might and licence to venge 3ow: [2682] I say þer ben ful many þinges þat schulde restreinge 3ow of vengeaunce takynge [2683] and make 3ow to encline to suffre and to haue pacience of þe wronges þat han ben doon to 3ow. [2684] First and forward 3e wol considre þe defautes þat been in 3oure owne persone. [2685] for whiche defautes god haþ suffred 3ow to haue þis tribulacioun as I haue sayd 3ow her byfore [2686] ¶ For þe poete saith // we oughten paciently to suffre þe tribulacioun þat cometh to vs whan þat we þenken and consideren þat we han deserued to haue hem [2687] ¶ And seint poul saith þat whan a man considereþ wel þe nombre of his defautes and of his synnes: [2688] þe peynes and þe tribulaciouns þat he suffereþ semen þe lasse vnto him [2689] ¶ and in as moche as him þenkith his synnes þe more heuy and greuouse: [2690] in so moche his peyne is þe lighter and þe more esier vn-to him [2691] ¶ Also 3e oughten to encline and bowe 3oure herte to take þe pacience of oure lord ihū crist. as seiþ seint peter in his epistles [2692] ¶ Ihū crist he seiþ haþ suffred for vs and 3iuen ensample vnto euery man to folwe and sewe him. [2693] For he dede neuer synne ne neuer cam vileyns worde out of his mouþ [2694] whan men cursed him: he cursed hem not ¶ And whan men beete him: he manased hem not. [2695] ¶ Also þe grete pacience which þat seintes þat been in paradys<sup>1</sup> han had in tribulaciouns þat þay haue had and suffred withoute desert/ or gult [2696] oughte moche stire 3ow to pacience [2697] ¶ Forþer more 3e schul enforce 3ow to haue pacience [2698] consideringe þat þe tribulaciouns of þis world but litel while enduren & soone passed ben and goon [2699] ¶ And þe ioye þat a man secheþ to haue by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable after þat þe

apostil seiþ in his epistil [2700] ¶ The ioye of god he  
 seiþ is perdurable þat is to say euer-more lastyng [2701]  
 ¶ Also troweth and bilieueþ stedefastly þat he is not  
 wel norished and taught þat can nought haue pacience  
 or wil nouȝt receyue pacience [2702] ¶ For Salomon saith  
 þat þe doctrine and þe witte of a man is I-knowe by  
 pacience [2703] ¶ And in anoþer place he seiþ ¶ he þat  
 hath pacience: gouerneþ him by gret prudence [2704]  
 ¶ And þe same salamon seiþ. þat þe wrapful and þe angry  
 man makeþ noyses. and þe pacient man attempereth  
 and stilleþ him. [2705] he seiþ also ¶ It is more  
 worth to be pacient þan for to be right strong. [2706] And  
 And he þat may haue his lordschipe of his oughne herte: is  
 more worþ and more to preise þan he þat by his force & by  
 his strengthe takeþ grete citees [2707] ¶ And þerfore saith  
 seint Iame in his epistil þat pacience is a gret vertu of  
 perfeccioun.

[2708] [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap* ]  
 [2709] but euery man may not haue þe perfeccioun þat ȝe  
 seekyn [2710] ne I am not of þe nombre of right par-  
 fyte men: [2711] For myn herte may neuer be in  
 pees vnto þe tyme it be venged [2712] ¶ And al be it/ so  
 that it was a gret peril to myne enemyes to don me a  
 vilonye in takinge vengeance vpon me: [2713] ȝit  
 taken þay noon heede of þe peril but filden here  
 wikked desir and her corrage. [2714] and þerfore me  
 þenkith men oughten nought repreue me þough I putte me  
 in a litel peril for to venge me [2715] ¶ And þough I do  
 a gret excesse þat is to say þat I venge oon outrage  
 by anoþer

[2716] ¶ A quod dame prudence ȝe say ȝoure wille  
 and as ȝow likith. [2717] but in noon caas in þe world a  
 man ne schulde nouȝt doon outrage ne excesse for to venge  
 him. [2718] ¶ For Cassidore seiþ. as euel doþ  
 he þat auengith him by outrage as he þat doth þe

outrage / [2719] and þerfore 3e schul venge 3ow after  
 þe ordre of right þat is to sayn by þe lawe and nouȝt  
 by excesse ne by outrage [2720] ¶ And also if 3e wil  
 venge 3ow of þe outrage of 3oure aduersaries in oþer  
 maner þan right comaundeþ 3e synnen [2721] ¶ And  
 þerfore saiþ Senec / that <sup>1</sup>a man schal neuer venge  
 schrewednes by schrewednes. [2722] ¶ And if 3e say  
 þat axep a man to defende violence by vyolence.  
 and fightyng by fightyng [2723] ¶ Certes 3e say soþ  
 whan þe defence is doon anon wipouten interualle or  
 wipouten taryinge or dilay [2724] for to defenden him  
 and nought for to venge him [2725] ¶ And it bihouep  
 a man putte such attemperance in his defence:  
 [2726] þat men haue no cause ne matiere to repreuen  
 him that defendith him of excesse and outrage [ . . .  
 . . . . . no gap] [2727] ¶ Parde 3e knowe wel  
 þat 3e make no defence as now for to defende 3ow  
 but for to venge 3ow [2728] and so semeþ it / þat 3e  
 haue no wille to do 3oure wille attemperelly [2729] &  
 þerfore me þenkiþ þat pacience is good ¶ For Salamon  
 saith þat he þat is not pacient schal haue gret  
 harm .

[2730] ¶ Certes quod melibeus I graunte 3ou wel þat  
 whan a man is impacient and wroth. [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap] [2731] for þe lawe saith  
 þat he is coupable þat entremettith him or mellith him with  
 such þing as aperteynep not vnto him [2732] ¶ Dan  
 Salamon saiþ. he þat entremetteþ him of þe  
 noyse or stryf of anoper man. is lik him þat takith  
 þe hound by þe eeres. [2733] For right as he þat  
 takith þe strong hound by þe eeres is oþer while biten with  
 þe hound: [2734] riȝt in þe same wise it is resoun þat  
 he haue harm þat by his impacience melleþ him of  
 þe noise of anoper man where it aperteynep not to  
 him [2735] ¶ But/ 3e schul knowe wel þat þis dede þat



is to sayn myn disease and my grief<sup>t</sup> toucheþ me right<sup>t</sup>  
neigh. [2736] .and þerfore þough I be wroþ<sup>t</sup>  
it is no meruayle. [2737] and sauynge þour  
grace I can not<sup>t</sup> see þat<sup>t</sup> it mighte gretly harme me  
þough I toke vengeance. [2738] For I am richer and  
more mighty þan myne enemyes been / [2739] And wel  
knowe þe þat<sup>t</sup> by money and by hauynge of<sup>t</sup> grete posses-  
siouns ben alle þe þinges of<sup>t</sup> þis world gouernede [2740]  
¶ And Salamon saith þat<sup>t</sup> alle þinges obeyen to  
moneye / dispraisynge þe power of<sup>t</sup> his aduersaries

[2741] [ . . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . . no gap] ¶ Tho sche spak<sup>t</sup> and sayde in  
þis wyse [2742] ¶ Certes deere sire I graunte þow þat<sup>t</sup>  
þe ben riche and mighty [2743] and þat richesse  
is good to hem þat wel haue geten it/ and þat<sup>t</sup>  
wel conne vse it [2744] For right<sup>t</sup> as þe body of<sup>t</sup> a  
man may not be wipoute þe soule: no more may a man  
lyue wipoute temperel goodes [2745] and by rich-  
esse may a man gete him greet frendschipe / [2746] <sup>1</sup>¶ And  
þerfore saith Pamphilles. If<sup>t</sup> a neet<sup>t</sup>-hurdes douȝter he seiþ  
be riche: sche may cheese of<sup>t</sup> a þousand men which  
she wol take to hir housbonde [2747] ¶ For  
of<sup>t</sup> a þousand men oon wil not<sup>t</sup> forsake hir ne refuse  
hire [2748] ¶ And þis pamphilles seiþ also ¶ If<sup>t</sup> þou be  
right<sup>t</sup> happy þat<sup>t</sup> is to sayn if<sup>t</sup> þou be right<sup>t</sup> riche: þanne  
schalt<sup>t</sup> þou fynde a gret<sup>t</sup> nombre of<sup>t</sup> felawes and frendes [2749]  
¶ And if<sup>t</sup> þy fortune chaunge þat<sup>t</sup> þou wax pore: fare  
wel frendschipe. [2750] For þou schalt<sup>t</sup> ben  
aloone wipouten eny companye but<sup>t</sup> if<sup>t</sup> it be þe  
compaignye of<sup>t</sup> pore folk<sup>t</sup> // [2751] And ȝit saith þis  
pamphillus more ouer ¶ That þey þat/ ben þral and  
bonde of<sup>t</sup> linage schullen ben maad worþy and noble by  
richesse [2752] ¶ And right<sup>t</sup> so as by richesse þer  
come many goodes: Right<sup>t</sup> so by pouert<sup>t</sup> comen þer  
many harmes.[. . . .] [2753] [. . . . .

. . . . . no gap] [2754] And þerfore clepeþ Cassidore pouert. [. . . . .] ruyne. [2755] þat is to sayn þe moder of ouerþrowyng<sup>r</sup> or fallynge doun [2756] ¶ & þerfore Pieres alphones oon of þe grettest aduersites of þis world is: [2757] whan a free man by kyn or burthe is constreigned by pouert to eten þe almes of his enemyes [2758] ¶ And þe same seiþ Innocent<sup>t</sup> in oon of his bookes ¶ þat sorweful & vnhappy is þe condicioun of a pouere begger. [2759] for if he axe nouȝt his mete: he deyeth for hungir: [2760] and if he axe: he deyep for schame. And algates þe necessite constreigneþ hym to axe. [2761] And þerfore seiþ Salamon þat bettre it is to deye þan to haue such pouert [2762] And as þe same Salamon saith Bettir is to deye on bitter deth þan for to lyue in such a wyse [2763] ¶ By þese resouns þat I haue sayd vnto ȝow and by many anoper resoun þat I knowe and couþe say [2764] I graunte ȝow þat riches ben goode to hem þat gete hem wel. & to hem þat hem wel vsen [2765] ¶ And þerfore wol I schewe ȝow how ȝe schulde bere ȝow in getyng<sup>r</sup> of riches and in what maner ȝe schulde vse hem

[2766] ¶ First ȝe schulde gete hem wipoute gret<sup>r</sup> desir by good leysir sokyngly and nought ouer hastily [2767] ¶ For a man þat is to desiryng<sup>e</sup> for to gete riches abandoneth him first to þeste and to alle opere yueles [2768] ¶ And þerfore seiþ Salamon ¶ he þat hastith him to bisyly to waxe riche: schal ben noon Innocent<sup>t</sup> [2769] ¶ He seiþ also þat þe riches þat hastily comeþ to a man: soone & lightly goth and passeth fro a man [2770] ¶ But þat riches þat comeþ alway litel and litel waxep alway and multipliep [2771] ¶ And sire ȝe schal gete riches by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure trauayle vnto ȝoure profyt<sup>t</sup> [2772] and þat wipoute wrong<sup>r</sup> or harm doynge to eny oper persone [2773] ¶ For þe lawe

saith þat no man makeþ himselfe riche þat dop  
 harm to anoper wight. [2774] þis is to say. þat  
 nature defendeþ and forbedith by right þat no man  
 make himselfe riche vnto þe harm of anoper persone.  
 [2775] Tullius saith. þat no sorwe ne drede  
 of deth. ne thought þat may falle to a man [2776]  
 is so moche azeinst nature as a man to encesce his  
 oughne profyt to þe harm of anoper man [2777] ¶ And  
 þough þe grete men and þe riche men gete richesse more  
 lightly þan þou: [2778] 3it schalt þou not be ydil ne  
 slowe to þy profyt/ For þou schalt in alle wise flee ydil-  
 nes. [2779] For Salamon saith þat ydelnesse techip  
 a man to do many yueles [2780] ¶ And þe same salamon  
 saip þat he þat trauaileth and besieþ him to tilye  
 þe lond schal ete þe breed. [2781] But he þat is ydil and  
 casteþ him to no busynesse ne occupacioun schal falle in to  
 pouert and deye for hunger [2782] ¶ And he þat is  
 ydel and slough can neuer fynde him tyme for to  
 do his profyt [2783] ¶ For þer is a versifiour saith;  
 þe ydel man excuseþ him in wynter by cause of þe  
 grete colde. And in somer by enchesoun of þe grete hete.  
 [2784] ¶ For þese causes saith Catoun ¶ waketh and enclineþ  
 3ow nou3t ouer moche for to slepe. For ouermuche reste  
 norischeþ and causeþ many vices [2785] ¶ And þefore  
 saith seint Ierom: Dop some goode deedes þat þe deuel  
 which þat is oure enemy ne fynde 3ow vnoccupied  
 [2786] ¶ For þe deuel ne takiþ not lightly vnto his werkes  
 suche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes

[2787] ¶ þanne þus in getyng of riches 3e  
 moot flee ydelnesse / [2788] ¶ and afterward 3e schul vse  
 þe riches þe whiche 3e han geten by 3oure witte and by  
 3oure trauaile [2789] in such a maner þat men  
 holde 3ow not skarce / ne to sparynge ne to fool large  
 þat is to say ouer large a spender [2790] For right as  
 men blamen an auerous man by cause of his skarsete  
 and chyncherie [2791] in þe same manere is he to blame

þat spendeth ouer largely [2792] ¶ And þerfore saith  
 Catoun ¶ Vse he saith þi richesþes þat þou hast y-geþen  
 [2793] in such a manere þat þay haue no matier ne  
 cause to calle þe neiþer wrecche ne chynche [2794]  
 ¶ For it is gret schame to a man to <sup>1</sup>haue a pouer herte  
 and a riche purse [2795] ¶ He saith also þe goodes þat  
 þou hast I-geþen vse hem by mesure þat is to say  
 spende hem mesurably [2796] For þay þat folily wasten  
 and spenden þe goodes þat þay haue: [2797] whan  
 þay haue no more propre of here oughne: þay schape hem  
 to take þe goodes of anoper man [2798] ¶ I say thanne  
 3e schul flee auarice [2799] vsynge 3our richesþe  
 in such manere þat [ . . . *no gap*] 3oure [. . . .]  
 be buried. [2800] but þat 3e haue þanne in 3oure  
 might and in 3oure weldynge. [2801] For þe wise man  
 reproueþ þe auerous man and saith þus in tuo  
 versus [2802] ¶ wher-to and why burieth a man his  
 goodes by his auarice and knowiþ wel þat needes  
 most he deye. [2803] for deth is þe ende of euery man  
 as in this present lif. [2804] And for what cause or  
 enchesoun ioyneth he him or knetteþ him so fast  
 vnto his goodes [2805] þat alle his wit'es mowe nought  
 disseuer him or departe him fro his goodes  
 [2806] & knowiþ wel or oughte knowe wel þat whan he  
 is deed he schal no þing bere with him out of þis  
 world. [2807] ¶ And þerfore seiþ seint/ Austyn þat  
 þe auerous man is likned vnto helle. [2808] þat þe  
 more þat it swolwith þe more it desireþ to swolwe and  
 deuoure [2809] ¶ And as wel as 3e wolde eschewe to be  
 cleped an auerous man or chynche: [2810] as wel  
 schulde 3e kepe 3ow and gouerne 3ow in such a wise  
 þat men cleped 3ow nou3t fool large [2811] ¶ Therfore seiþ  
 Tullius ¶ The goodes he seiþ of þin hous schulde  
 nought ben hidde ne kepte so clos: but þat þay might  
 ben opened by pite and by bonairete [2812] þat is to  
 sayn to 3iue hem part þat han gret neede. [2813]

ne þy goodes schul not be so open to be euery mannes goodes [2814] ¶ Aftirward in getyng of 3oure riches and in vsyng hem 3e schul alway haue þre þinges in 3oure herte [2815] þat is to say Oure lord god. Conscience. and good name. [2816] First 3e schul haue god in 3oure herte [2817] and for no riches 3e schul in no manere doo no þing which might displese god þat is 3our creatour and 3oure maker. [2818] For after þe word of Salamon. It is better to haue litil good wip loue of god. [2819] þan to haue mochil good and tresor and lese þe loue of his lord god. [2820] And þe prophete saith. Better is to ben a good man and haue litel good þan tresore [2821] þe to ben holden a schrewe and haue gret riches [2822] ¶ And 3it say I forþer more þat 3e schuln alway doon 3oure busynesse to gete 3ow riches. [2823] so þat 3e gete hem with good conscience [2824] ¶ And þe apostil seith. ther 1nys þing in þis world of which we schuln haue so gret ioye as whan oure conscience bereþ vs good witnes [2825] ¶ And þe wise man saith substaunce of a man is ful good whan synne is not in his conscience. [2826] Afterward in getyng of 3oure riches and in vsyng of hem [2827] þou most haue gret busynesse & gret diligence þat 3oure good name be alway kept and conserued [2828] ¶ For Salamon saith. better it is and more abelith a man for to haue a good name þan for to haue gret riches [2829] and þerfore he saith in anoper place. Do gret diligence saith Salamon in kepyng of þy frend and of þy good name. [2830] For it schal lenger abyde wip þe þan any tresor be it neuer so precious [2831] ¶ And certes he schulde nouzt be cleped a gentil man þat after god and good conscience alle þinges left ne dop his diligence and busynesse to kepe his good name. [2832] And Cassidore saith þat it is signe of a good man & a gentil or of a gentil herte whan a man loueþ or desireþ to

haue a good name. [2833] and þerfore saith seint' augustyn  
 þat' þer ben tuo þinges þat' ben necessarie and needful  
 [2834] and þat is good conscience and good loos [2835]  
 þat' is to sayn. good conscience in þin oughme persone  
 inward. and good loos of þin neghebor outward.  
 [2836] and he þat' trustep him so moche in his good  
 conscience [2837] þat' he displesep and settip at  
 nought his good name or loos and rekkep nought þough  
 he kepe not his good name: nys but' a cruel churl

[2838] ¶ Sire now haue I schewed 3ow how 3e schulde  
 doon in getyng' of good and riches and how 3e schuld vse  
 hem [2839] I see wel þat' for þe trust' þat' 3e haue in  
 3oure riches: 3e wolde meue werre and bataile [2840]  
 ¶ I counseile 3ow þat' 3e bygynne no werre in trust' of  
 3oure riches. for thanne suffisen not' werres to mayn-  
 tene [2841] ¶ And þerfore saith a philosophre ¶ That  
 man þat' desireþ and wol algate haue werre: schal  
 neuer haue sufficeaunce. [2842] For þe richere þat' he is:  
 þe gretter dispense most' he make if' he wol haue wor-  
 schipe or victorie [2843] ¶ And Salamon saith. þe  
 gretter riches þat' a man hap: þe moo despendours he  
 hap. [2844] And deere sire al be it' so þat' for 3oure  
 riches 3e mowe haue moche folk': [2845] 3it' byhouep  
 it' not' ne it is not' good to bygynne werre þer as 3e  
 may in oþer maner haue pees vnto 3oure worschipe  
 and profyt'. [2846] For þe victorie of batailles þat' ben  
 in þis world lith not' in gret nombre or multitude of  
 poeple ne in vertu of man: [2847] but it' <sup>1</sup>lith in  
 þe wille & in þe hond of oure lord god almighty  
 [2848] And Iudas machabeus which was  
 goddes knight' [2849] whan he schulde fighte azeinst' his  
 aduersaries þat' hadde a gretter nombre & a gretter mul-  
 titude of folk' and strengere þan was þe poeple of þis macha-  
 be. [2850] 3it' he reconforted his litel poeple / and  
 sayde ryȝt' in þis wise [2851] ¶ As lightly quod he  
 may oure lord god almighty ȝiue victory to fewe folk'.

[ . . . *no gap*] [2852] For þe victorie of batailles comeþ nouȝt by þe grete nombre of poeple: [2853] but it comeþ fro oure lord god of heuen [2854] ¶ And dere sire for as moche as þer is no man certeyn if it be worpi þat god ȝiue him victorie [ . . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap*] or nouȝt after þat þat Salamon saiþ. [2855] þerfore euery man schulde gretly drede werres to bygynne. [2856] And by cause þat in batailles falle many meruayles and periles [2857] and happeþ oþer while þat as soone is þe grete man slayn as þe litel man. [2858] and as it is writen in þe secounde book of kynges þe deedes of batayles be auenturous and no thing certeyn [2859] For as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as anoþer. [2860] and þerfore is gret peril in werre. þerfore schulde a man flee and eschewe werre in as moche as a man may goodly [2861] ¶ For Salamon saith. ¶ he þat loueth peril schal falle in peril

[2862] ¶ After þat dame prudens hadde spoke in þis maner: Melibe answerde and sayde [2863] ¶ I se wel dame þat by ȝoure faire wordes and by ȝoure resouns þat ȝe haue schewed me þat þe werre likeþ ȝow no þing. [2864] but/ I haue not/ ȝit/ herd ȝoure counseil how I schal doo in þis neede

[2865] ¶ Certes quod sche I counseile ȝow þat ȝe accorde wiþ ȝoure aduersaries and þat ȝe haue pees with hem [2866] ¶ For seint Iame saiþ in his epistles þat by concord and pees þe smale ryches wexen grete. [2867] and by debaat and discord þe gret riches fallen down [2868] ¶ And ȝe knowe wel þat oon of þe moste grettest and soueraign þinges þat is in þis world is vnite & pees [2869] ¶ And þerfore saith oure lord ihū crist to his aposteles in þis wise [2870] ¶ wol happy and blessed be þay þat louen and purchacen pees. for þay ben called children of crist [2871] ¶ A quod Melibe. Now se I wel þat ȝe louen not myn honour ne my worschipe [2872] and knoweþ wel þat myne

aduersaries han bygonne þis debate and brige by here outrage [2873] And ȝe see wel þat þay require ne praye me not of pees. ne þay askyn nouȝt to be recounseild: [2874] wol ȝe þanne þat I goo & <sup>1</sup>meke me vnto hem and crie hem mercy. [2875] for soþe þat were not my worschipe [2876] ¶ For right as men seyn þat ouer gret pryde engendreþ despisyng. so fareþ it by to gret humblete or mekenesse

[2877] ¶ Thanne bygan dame prudence to make semblant of wrappe and sayde. [2878] Certes sire saue ȝoure grace. I loue ȝoure honour and ȝoure profyt as I doo myn owne and euer haue doon [2879] ȝe ne mowe noon oþer seyn [2880] ¶ And ȝit if I hadde sayd ȝe scholde haue purchaced pees and þe reconsiliacioun. I ne hadde not moche mys-take me ne seyð amys: [2881] For þe wise man saith. þe discencioun bigynneþ by anoþer man and þe reconsilynge bygynneþ by þyself [2882] ¶ And þe prophete saith ¶ Flee schame and schrewednesse and doo goodnesse. [2883] Seeke pees and folwe it as moche as in þe is. [2884] Ȝet seiþ he not þat ȝe schul raþer pursewe to ȝoure aduersaries for pees þan þei schul to ȝow. [2885] For I knowe wel þat ȝe be so hard-herted þat ȝe wil doo no þing for me [2886] ¶ And salamon saith. he þat is ouer hard herted atte laste he schal mys happe and my[s]-tyde

[2887] ¶ whan melibe had seyn dame prudence make semblaunce of wrappe: he sayde in þis wise. [2888] dame I pray ȝow þat ȝe be not displesed of þinges þat I say [2889] For ȝe knoweth wel þat I am angry and wroþ and þat is no wonder. [2890] and þay þat ben wroþ wot not wel what þay doon ne what þay say [2891] þerfore þe prophete saiþ þat troublit eyen haue no cleer sight [2892] ¶ But sayeth and counsaileþ me forþ as ȝow likeþ For I am redy to doo right as ȝe wol desire. [2893] and if ȝe reproue me of my folye: I am þe more holde to loue ȝow and to prayse



3ow [2894] ¶ For Salamon saip þat he þat répreueþ him þat doth folie! [2895] he schal fynde gretter grace þan he þat deceyueth him by swete wordes

[2896] ¶ Thanne sayde dame prudence I make no semblant of wrappe ne of anger but for 3oure grete profyt [2897] ¶ For Salamon saith. he is more worth þat reproueþ or chydeþ a fool for his folie schewyng him semblant of wrappe [2898] þan he þat supporteþ him and prayseþ him in his mysdoynge. and laugheþ at his folie [2899] ¶ And þis same Salomon saip afterward þat by þe sorweful visage of a man þat is to sayn by sory and heuy countenaunce of a man [2900] þe fool correcteþ himself and amendeþ

[2901] ¶ þanne sayde Melibeus. I schal not conne answer to so many resouns as 3e putten to me and schewen. [2902] sayeth schortly 3oure wille and 3oure<sup>1</sup> counseil. and I am al redy to fulfille and parfourme it

[2903] ¶ Thanne dame prudence discouered al here counsail and hire wille vn-to him and sayde [2904] ¶ I counseile 3ow. quod sche aboue alle þinges þat 3e make pees bitwen god and 3ow [2905] and beþ reconsiled vnto him and to his grace. [2906] for I haue sayd 3ow her biforn. God hath suffred 3ow haue þis [ . . . no gap] disease for 3oure synnes [2907] and if 3e do as I say 3ow god wol sende 3oure aduersaries vnto 3ow [2908] and make hem falle at 3oure feet al redy to doo 3oure wille and 3oure commandement [2909] ¶ For Salamon saith. whan þe condicioun of man is plesant and likyng to god! [2910] he chaungeþ þe hertes of þe mannes aduersaries and constreigneþ hem to biseke him of pees & of grace. [2911] and I pray 3ow let me speke wip 3oure aduersaries in priue place [2912] for þay schul not knowe it by 3oure wille or 3oure assent [2913] ¶ And þanne whan I knowe here wille and here assent! I may counseile 3ow þe more seurlly

[2914] ¶ Dame quod Melibeus doþ 3oure wille and

3oure likyng<sup>r</sup> [2915] For I putte me holly in 3oure disposicioun and ordinatunce

[2916] ¶ Thanne Dame prudence whan sche seih þe good wille of hir housbond. sche deliuered and took<sup>t</sup> a vis by hir self<sup>r</sup> [2917] þenkyng<sup>e</sup> how sche mighte bringe þis neede vnto a good conclusioun and to a good ende [2918] ¶ And whan sche saugh hire tyme: sche sente for þese aduersaries to come vnto hire in to a priue place [2919] and schewed wysly vnto hem þe grete goddes þat comen of pees [2920] and þe grete harmes and perils þat ben in werre [2921] and sayde to hem in goodly manere how þat hem aughte to haue gret<sup>r</sup> repentaunce [2922] of þe iniurie & wrong<sup>r</sup> þat þay hadde doon to Melibe hire lord and vnto hire and hire douȝter.

[2923] and whan þay herden þe goodly wordes of dame prudence [2924] þey were þo surprised and rauysshed and hadden so gret ioye of hire þat wonder was to telle [2925] ¶ A lady quod thay. 3e haue schewed vnto vs þe blessing<sup>r</sup> of swetnes after þe sawe of Dauid þe prophete [2926] for þe recounsilyng<sup>r</sup> which we be nouȝt<sup>r</sup> worþy to haue in no manere. [2927] But we oughten require it wip gret contricioun and humilite. [2928] 3e of 3oure grete goodnes haue presented vnto vs [2929] ¶ Now we se wel þat þe science of Salamon is ful trewe [2930] he saith þat swete wordes multiplen and encrescen frendes and maken schrewes to ben debonaire and meke.

[2931] certes quod þay we putten oure deede and al oure matier and cause al holly in 3oure good wille [2932] and ben redy to obeye to þe speche<sup>1</sup> and to þe comaundement<sup>r</sup> of my lord Melibe. [2933] and þerfore deere & benigne lady we pray 3ow and byseke 3ow as meekely as we conne and may [2934] þat it like to 3owre grete goodnes to fulfille in deede 3oure goodliche wordes. [2935] For we considere and knowleche wel

þat we haue offended and greued my lord Melibe out of  
resoun and out of mesure [2936] so ferforth þat we ben  
nouȝt/ of power to make his amendes. [2937] and þerfore we  
oblie vs and bynde vs and oure frendes for to doo al his wille  
and his comaundementȝ. [2938] But perauenture he haþ such  
heynnes & such wrappe to vs ward by cause of oure  
offence: [2939] þat he wol enioyne vs such peyne  
as we mow not bere ne susteyne [2940] ¶ and þerfore  
noble lady we biseke to ȝoure wommanly pite [2941]  
to take such auysement in þis neede þat we ne oure  
frendes ben not disherited and destroyed þurgh oure  
folye

[2942] ¶ Certes quod dame prudence it is an hard þing  
and right a perilous [2943] þat a man put him al outrelly  
in þe arbitracioun and Iuggement and þe might and  
power of his enemyes [2944] ¶ For Salamon seiþ leueþ  
and ȝiueþ credence to þat þat I schal say. I say  
quod he ȝeue poeple and gouernours of holy chirche  
[2945] to þy sone to þi wyf/. and to þy frend ne to  
þy brother [2946] ne ȝeue þou neuer might ne  
maystry of þy body whil þou lynest [2947] ¶ Now  
sith he defendith a man schulde not ȝiue to his  
broþer ne to his frend þe might of his body.  
[2948] by a strengre resoun he defendeþ and forbedith a  
man to ȝiue his body to his enemye. [2949] but nape-  
les I counseile ȝow þat ȝe mystruste nouȝt my lord.  
[2950] For I wot wel and knowe verrailly þat he is  
debonaire and meke. large curteys [2951] and no  
þing desirous ne coueytous of good ne richesse. [2952]  
For þer nys no þing in þis world þat he desireth  
saue oonly worschipe and honour. [2953] Forþermore  
I knowe and am right seure þat he wol no þing  
doo in þis neede wipoute counsail of me [2954] and I  
schal so worche in this cause þat by þe grace of oure lord  
god ȝe schul be recounsiled vnto vs

[2955] ¶ Thanne sayde þay with oon voys worschipful

lady we putte vs and oure goodes al fully in 3oure wille and disposicioun [2956] and ben redy to come what day þat it like 3ow and vnto 3oure noblesse / to limite vs or assigne vs [2957] for to make oure obligacioun and bond as strong as it likeþ to 3oure goodnes [2958] þat we mowe fulfille þe wille of 3ow and of my lord Melibe

[2959] ¶ whan dame prudence had <sup>1</sup>herd þe answeres of þise men. sche bad hem go agayn pryuely [2960] and sche retourned to hir lord Melibe and tolde him how sche fond his aduersaries ful repentant [2961] knowlechinge ful lowely here synnes and trespasses and how þay were redy to suffre alle peyne [2962] requiring and praying him of mercy and pite

[2963] ¶ þanne saide Melibeus. he is wel worpy to haue pardoun and for3euenes of his synne þat excusith not his synne [2964] but knowlecheþ and repentith him axinge indulgence. [2965] For Senek saith. þere is þe remissioun and for3euenesse wher as þe confessioun is [2966] ¶ For confessioun is neighebor to Innocence [2967] And he saith in anoper place. he þat hath schame of his synne knowlechith it/. [ . . . . . no gap] and þerfore I assente and conferme me to haue pees. [2968] but it is good þat we doo it nouȝt wipoute assent & þe wille of oure frendes

[2969] ¶ Thanne was prudence right glad & iolyf and sayde. [2970] Certes sire quod sche 3e ben wel and goodly auysed. [2971] for right as by þe counsail and assent and help of 3oure frendes 3e haue be stired to venge 3ow & make werre. [2972] Right so wipoute here counseil schul 3e nought acorde 3ow ne haue pees wip 3oure aduersaries. [2973] For þe lawe saith. Ther nys no þing so good by way of kinde as þing to be vnbounde by him þat it was bounde

[2974] And þanne dame prudence wipoute delay or taryinge sente anon messageres for here kyn and for here olde frendes whiche þat were trewe and wyse [2975]

and tolde hem by ordre in þe presence of Melibe of þis matier as it is aboue expressed and declared [2976] and praide hem þat þay wolde ȝiue here auys and counseil what best were to doon in þis matiere [2977] ¶ And whan melibeus frendes hadde take here auys and deliberacioun of þe forsayde matier [2978] and hadden examyned it by greet besynes and gret diligence [2979] þey ȝafe him ful counsail to haue pees and reste. [2980] and þat Melibeus schulde wip good hert resceyue his aduersaries to forȝiuenes and mercy

[2981] ¶ And whan dame prudence had herd thassent of hir lord Melibeus and conseil of his frendes [2982] accorde wip hire wille & hire entencioun: [2983] sche was wonderly glad in herte and sayde [2984] ¶ Ther is a noble prouerbe þat saith ¶ The goodnesse þat þou maist do þis day: [2985] abyde not ne delaye it nouȝt/ vnto to morwe. [2986] and perfore I counseile ȝow ȝe sende ȝoure messageres<sup>1</sup> whiche þat ben discrete and wise [2987] vnto ȝoure aduersaries tellynge hem on ȝoure bihalue [2988] þat if þay wol trete of pees and of accord [2989] þat þay schape hem wipoute dilay or tarynge to come vnto vs. [2990] which þing was parformed in dede [2991] and whan þese trespasours and repentyng folk/ of here folies þat is to sayn þe aduersaries of Melibe [2992] hadden herd what þe messangeres sayden vnto hem: [2993] þay were right glad and iolif and answerden ful mekely and benignely [2994] ȝeldyng graces & þankinges to here lord Melibe and to al his compaignye [2995] and schope hem wipout delay to go wip þe messangeres and obeye hem to þe comaundement of here lord Melibe

[2996] ¶ And right anon þay token here way to þe court of Melibe / [2997] and token wip hem some of here trewe frendes to make faith for hem and for to ben here borwes [2998] ¶ And whan þay were comen to

[<sup>1</sup> leaf 214, back]

þe presence of Melibeus he seyde hem þise wordes  
 [2999] ¶ It stondith þus quod Melibeus and soþ it is  
 þat 3e [3000] causeles and wipouten skile and resoun  
 [3001] haue doon gret iniuries and wronges to me and  
 to my wyf prudence and to my douȝter also. [3002] For  
 3e haue entred in to myn hous by violence [3003] and haue  
 doon such outrage þat alle men knowe wel þat 3e haue  
 deserued þe deth. [3004] And þerfore wil I knowe  
 and wite of 3ow [3005] wheþer 3e wol putte þe  
 punyschment and þe chastisement and þe vengeaunce/ of  
 þis outrage in þe wille of me and of my wif dame prudence  
 or 3e wil not

[3006] ¶ þanne þe wisest of hem þre answerde for  
 hem alle & sayde [3007] ¶ Sire quod he we knowe  
 wel þat we be vnworþy to come to þe court  
 of so gret a lord and so worþy as 3e be [3008] ¶ For  
 we han so gretly mystake vs and haue offendid and giltyd  
 in such a wise ageins 3oure heighe lordschipe [3009] þat  
 trewely we haue deserued þe dep [3010] ¶ But 3it/ for  
 þe grette goodnes and debonairete þat al þe world  
 witnessep of 3oure persone: [3011] we submitten vs to  
 þin excellence and benignite of 3oure gracious lordschipe  
 [3012] and ben redy to obeye to alle 3oure comaundement3  
 [3013] biþe kyng 3ow þat of 3oure merciabile pite 3e  
 wol considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun  
 [3014] and graunte vs forȝiuenes of oure outrage  
 trespas and offence. [3015] For wel 3e knowen þat 3oure  
 liberal grace and mercy strechen forþere in to good-  
 nesse þan doþ oure outrage gilt and trespas in to  
 wikkednes [3016] al be it þat cursedly & damp-  
 nably we <sup>1</sup>haue agilt aȝeinst 3oure highe lordschipe

[3017] ¶ Thanne Melibe took hem vp fro þe ground  
 ful benignely [3018] and resceyued here obligaciouns and here  
 londes by here opes vpon here plegges & borwes [3019]  
 and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne vnto his  
 court [3020] for to accepte and receyue þe sentence and

iuggement þat Melibe wolde comaunde to be doon on hem by þese causes aforȝ sayde. [3021] which þing ordeyned: euery man retourned home to his hous

[3022] ¶ And whan þat Dame prudence saugh hiro tyme: sche feyned and axed hire lord Melibe [3023] what vengeance he þoughte to take vpon his aduersaries.

[3024] to which Melibeus answerd and saide. Certes quod he I þenke and purpose me fully [3025] to disherite hem of al þat euer þay haue and for to putte hem in exil for euermore

[3026] Certes quod dame prudence þis were a cruel sentence and mochil azeinst resoun [3027] For ȝe ben riche ynough & haue noon neede of oþer mennes good [3028] and ȝe mighte lightly gete ȝow a coueitous name [3029] which is vicious þing and oughte to ben eschewed of euery man [3030] for after þe sawe of þe word of þapostil: Couetise is roote of alle harmes. [3031] And þerfore it were bettre for ȝow to lese so moche good of ȝoure oughne þan for to take of here good in þis manere. [3032] For bettir it is to lese good wip worschipe þan it is to wynne good with vilonye and schame. [3033] and euer a man oughte to do his diligence and his busynesse to gete him a good name. [3034] [ . . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap*] [3035] but he schulde enforce him alway to do som þing by which he may renouele his good name. [3036] for it is writen þat þe olde goode loos of a man is soone doon or goon and passed whan it is not newed ne renoueled. [3037] And as touchinge þat ȝe sayn þat ȝe wol exile ȝoure aduersaries: [3038] þat þinketh me mochil azeinst resoun and out of mesure [3039] consideriþ þe power þat þay han ȝyue to ȝow vpon here body and on hemself [3040] ¶ And it is writen þat he is worþy to lese his priuelege þat mys vseth þe might and þe power þat is ȝene to him [3041] ¶ And ȝit I sette þe caas ȝe mighte enioyne hem þat peyne by right and lawe [3042] which I

trowe 3e mow nouȝt do [3043] I say 3e mighte nouȝt  
 putte it to execucioun peraventure [3044] and þanne  
 were it likly to torne to þe werre as it was biforn  
 [3045] And þerfore if 3e wol þat men do 3ow obeis-  
 saunce: 3e moste deme more curteisly [3046] þis is to  
 sayn. 3e moste ȝiue more esyere sentence & iuggement  
 [3047] ¶ For <sup>1</sup>it is writen. he þat most curteisly  
 comaundeth to him men most obeyen. [3048] and þer-  
 fore I pray 3ow þat in þis necessite and in þis neede  
 3e caste 3ow to ouercome 3oure herte [3049] ¶ For Senek  
 saip. he þat ouercomeþ his herte ouercomeþ  
 twyes [3050] ¶ And thullius saith. þer is no þing so  
 comendable in a gret lord [3051] as whan he is debon-  
 aire and meeke and appesith him listly [3052] ¶ And I pray  
 3ow þat 3e wol forbere now to do vengeance [3053] in  
 such a manere þat 3oure goode name may be kept / &  
 conserued. [3054] and þat men mowe haue cause / and  
 matiere to prayse 3ow of pite and of mercy [3055] and  
 þat 3e haue noon cause to repente 3ow of þing þat 3e doon  
 [3056] ¶ For senec saith ¶ he ouercomeþ in an euel  
 manere þat repenteth him of his victorie [3057] ¶ wher-  
 fore I pray 3ow let mercy be in  
 3oure herte [3058] to theffect and thentent þat god  
 almighty haue mercy and pite vpon 3ow in his laste iuggement  
 [3059] ¶ For seint Iame saith in his Epistil: Iuggement wip  
 oute mercy schal be doon to him þat hap no mercy vpon  
 another wight

[3060] whan Melibe had herd þe grete skiles  
 and resouns of dame prudens and wys informacioun  
 and techynge: [3061] his herte gan enclyne to þe wille of  
 his wyf consideryng hir trewe entent: [3062] con-  
 firmed him anon and consented fully to werke after hir  
 reed and counseil [3063] ¶ And þankid god of whom pro-  
 cedeth al goodnes þat him sente a wif of so gret  
 discrecioun [3064] ¶ And whan þe day cam þat his aduer-  
 saries schulden appere in his presence: [3065] he spak



ful goodly and sayde in þis wise. [3066] ¶ Al be  
 it so þat of ȝoure pryde and heigh presumpcioun and folye  
 and of ȝoure negligence/ and vnconnyng [3067] ȝe haue  
 mys-bore ȝow and trespassed vnto me: [3068] ȝit/ for as  
 moche as I se and biholde ȝoure humilite  
 [3069] þat ȝe ben sory and repentaunt of ȝoure giltes:  
 [3070] hit constreigneth me to do ȝow grace. and mercy.  
 [3071] wherfore I receyue ȝow to my grace [3072] and  
 forȝeue ȝow outerly alle þe offenses iniuries and wronges  
 þat ȝe haue don to me and agayns me and myne / [3073] this  
 is þeffect & to þis ende þat god of his endeles mercy  
 [3074] wole at þe tyme of oure deyinge forȝiue vs oure  
 giltes þat we haue trespassed to him in þis wrecched  
 world. [3075] for douteles & we ben sory & repentaunt  
 of þe synnes & giltes whiche we haue trespassed Inne in þe  
 sight of oure lord god: [3076] he is so free and <sup>1</sup>so merci-  
 able [3077] þat he wil forȝiue vs oure gultes [3078]  
 and bringe vs to þe blisse þat neuer hap ende AmeN  
 ¶ Here endith Chaucer his tale of Melibe

[leaf 226]

¶ And here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe monkes tale /

[*Break of one line in the MS.*]

**W**han ended was my tale of Melibe 3079  
 And of prudence and hire benignite  
 Oure hoste sayde as I am faithful man

And by þe precious corpus Madryan

I hadde leuer þan a barel ale

That godeleef my wyf had herd þis tale 3084

For sche is no þing of such pacience

As was þis melibeus wyf dame prudence

By goddes boones whan I bete my knaues

Sche bringeth me forth þe grete clobbet staues 3088

And criep slee þe dogges euerychon

And breke of hem bope bak and bon

And if þat eny neghebour of myne

wol nought to my wyf in chirche enclyne 3092

Or be so hardy to hir to trespase

whan sche comþ hom sche rampeth in my face

And criep false coward wreke þy wyf

By Corpes bones I wil haue þy knyf 3096

And þou schalt/ haue my distaf and go spynne

Fro day to night þus sche wil bygynne /

Allas sche saith þat euer I was I-schape

To wedde a mylk-sop or a coward ape 3100

That wil be ouer-lad wip euery wight

þou darst nought stonde by þy wyues right

This is my lif but if þat I wil fight

And out atte dore anoon I most me dight / 3104

And ellis I am lost / but if þat I

Be lik a wilde leoun fool-hardy

I wot wel sche wol do me sle som day

Som neighebor and þanne renne away 3108

For I am perilous with knyf in honde

Al be it þat I dar not hir wip-stonde

## GROUP B. § 11. MELIBE-MONK LINK. Harleian 7334. 531

For sche is big' in armes by my faith 3111  
 That' schal he fynde þat hire mys doth or saith [leaf 223, back]  
 But' let' vs passe a way fro þis matiere  
 My lord þe monk' quod he be mery of' chere /  
 For 3e schul telle a tale trewely  
 Lo Rowchestre stant' heer faste by 3116  
 Ryde forþ myn oughne lord brek' nouȝt' oure game  
 But' by my troupe I can not' ȝoure name  
 whether schal I calle ȝow my lord dan Iohā  
 Or daūn Thomas or elles dan albon 3120  
 Of' what' hous be ȝe by ȝour fader kyn  
 I vow to god þou hast' a ful fair skyn  
 It' is a gentil pasture þer þou gost'  
 Thow art' not' lik' a penaunt' or a goost' 3124  
 vpon my faith þou art' an officer  
 Som worþy sexteyn or som Celerer  
 For by my fader soule as to my doome  
 Thou art' an officer whan þou art' at hoom 3128  
 No pouer cloysterer ne non nouys  
 But' a gouernour wily and wys  
 And þer wiþ al of' brawne and of' bones  
 A wel faryng' persone for þe noones 3132  
 I praye god ȝiue him confusioun  
 þat' first/ þe brouȝte to religioun  
 Thow woldist' han be a tredefoul aright'  
 haddist' þou as gret' a leue as might' 3136  
 To parforme al þi wil in engendrure  
 Thow haddist' bigeten many a creature  
 Allas why werest' þou so wyd a cope  
 God ȝif' me sorwe and I were a pope 3140  
 Nought' only þou but' euery mighty man  
 Though he were schore brode vpon his pan  
 Schuld han a wif' for al þis world is lorn  
 Religioun hath take vp al þe corn 3144  
 Of' tredyng' and we burel men ben schrympes  
 Of' feble trees þer comeþ feble ympes

This makip þat' oure heires ben so sclender  
 And feble þat' þay may not' wel engender 3148  
 This makeþ þat' our wyfes wol assaye  
 Religious folk' for þay may bettre paye [leaf 227]  
 Of' venus payementes þan may we  
 God woot' no lusscheburghies paye 3e / 3152  
 beþ nouȝt' wroþ my lorde þough I play  
 For oft' in game a soth I haue herd say  
 This worþy monk' took' al in pacience /  
 And saide I wol doon al my diligence 3156  
 Als fer as sounep in to honeste /  
 To telle 3ow a tale or tuo or þre  
 And if' 3ow lust' to herken hiderward  
 I wil 3ow say þe lif' of' seint' Edward 3160  
 Or elles first' tredis wil I 3ow telle /  
 Of' which I haue an hundred in my celle /  
 Tregedis is to sayn a certeyn storie  
 As olde bookes maken vs memorie 3164  
 Of' hem þat' stood in greet' prosperite  
 And is fallen out' of' heigh degre  
 In to miserie and endith wrecchedly  
 And þay ben versifyed comunly 3168  
 Of' six feet' which men clepe exametron  
 In prose ben eek' endited many oon  
 And in metre eek' and in sondry wise  
 Lo þis declaryng' ought' ynough suffise / 3172  
 Now herkneþ if 3ow likith for to heere  
 But' first' I 3ow biseche in þis matiere /  
 þough I by ordre telle not' þise þinges  
 Be it' of' popes emperours or kynges 3176  
 After her age as men may write fynde  
 But' telle hem som bifore. and som byhynde /  
 As it comeþ now / to my remembraunce  
 haueþ me excused of' myn ignoraunce 3180

[Break of one line in the MS.]

**I** wol bywaile in maner of tregedye  
 The harm of hem þat stood in heigh degre  
 And fallen so þe is no remedye  
 To bring' hem out' of her aduersite 3184  
 For certeynly whan fortune lust' to flee  
 Ther may no man þe cours of hir whiel holde  
 let no man truste in blynd prosperite [leaf 227, back]  
 Beþ war by þese ensamples trewe and olde / 3188  
 [No stanza-breaks in the MS.]

[Lucifer.]

**A**T lucifer þough he an aungil were ¶ Lucifer  
 And no man at/ him wil I bygynne  
 For þough fortune may non aungel dere  
 From heigh degre ȝit/ fel he for his synne 3192  
 Doun in to helle. wher he ȝet is Inne  
 O lucifer brightest' of aungels alle  
 Now art' þou Sathanas þat' maist' nouȝt' twynne  
 Out' of miserie in which þou art falle 3196

[Adam.]

**L**o adam in þe feld of Damassene ¶ Adam  
 wiþ goddes oughne fynger wrought' was he /  
 And nought' bigeten of mannes sperma vnclene  
 And welt' al paradys sauynge oon tre 3200  
 had neuer worldly man suche degre  
 As adam til he for mys gouernance  
 was dryuen out' of heigh prosperite  
 To labour and to helle and to meschaunce 3204

[*Sampson.*]

Lo Sampson . þat was annunciate	¶ Sampson
By þangel long <sup>r</sup> er his natiuite /	
And was to god almighty consecrate	
And stood in nobles whil þat he might se	3208
was neuer such anoper as was he	
To speke of strengþ . and þerto hardynesse	
But to his wyfes tolde he his secre	
Thurgh which he slough himself for wrecchidnesse /	3212

[ . . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	3216
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . .	
. . . . . no gap in the MS.]	3220

Thre hundred foxis . tok Sampson for Ire	
And alle her tayles he togider bond	
And sette þe foxes tailes alle on fuyre	
For he in euery tail hath knyht a brond	3224
And þay brent alle þe cornes of þat lond	
And alle her Olyuers . and vynes eeke	
A þousand men he slough eek wip his hond	
And hadde no wepen but an asses cheeke	3228

Whan þay were slayn so þursted him þat he	
was wel ner lorn for which he gan to preye	
That god wolde of his peyne haue som pite	
And send him drynk and elles most he deye	3232
And out of his asses cheke þat was so dreye	[leaf 223]
Out of a wound toþ sprong anon a welle	
Of which he dronk ynough schortly to seye	
Thus halp him god as Iudicum can telle	3236

By verray fors of algason on a night  
 Maugre þe philistiens of þat cite  
 The gates of þe toun he hap vp plight/  
 And on his bak caried hem hap he / 3240  
 heigh vpon an hil wher men might hem se /  
 O noble almighty Sampson leef and deere  
 haddeþ þou nought to wommen told þy secre  
 In al þe world ne hadde be þy peere 3244

This sampson neyther siser dronk ne wyn /  
 Ne on his heed com rasour noon ne schere  
 By precept of þe messenger diuyn  
 For alle his strengþes in his heres were 3248  
 And fully twenty wynter 3er by 3ere/  
 he hadde of Ierusalem þe gouernaunce  
 But soone he schal wepe many a teere  
 For wymmen schuln him bringe to meschaunce 3252

Vn-to his lemman Dalida he tolde  
 That in his heres al his strengþe lay  
 And falsly to his foomen sche him solde  
 And slepyng in hir barm vpon a day 3256  
 Sche made to clippe or schere his heres away  
 And made his foomen al his craft espien  
 And whan þay fond him in þis array  
 They bound him fast and put out boþe his yen 3260

But er his heer clipped was or I-schaue  
 Ther was no bond wiþ which men might him bynde  
 But now is he in prisoun in a caue  
 Ther as þay made him at þe querne grynde 3264  
 O noble Sampson strengest of al man kynde  
 O whilom iugge in glory and in richesse /  
 Now maystow wepe wiþ þine eyzen blynde  
 Sith þou fro wele art falle to wrecchednesse 3268

Thend of þis caytif was as I schal say  
 his foomen made a fest vpon a day  
 And made him as here fool biforn hem play [leaf 212, back]  
 And þis was in a temple of gret array 3272  
 But/ atte last he made a foul affray  
 For he two pilers schook and made hem falle  
 And doun fel temple and al and þer it lay  
 And slough himsilf and eek his fomen alle 3276

This is to sayn þe princes euer ichon  
 And eek þe þousand bodies were þer slayn  
 with fallyng of þe grete temple of stoon  
 Of Sampson wil I no more sayn 3280  
 Be war by þese ensamples olde and playn  
 That no man telle his counseil to his wyf  
 Of such þing as he wold haue secre fayn  
 If/ þat/ it touche his lymes or his lif 3284

[*Hercules.*]

Of Ercules þe souereyn conquerour ¶ De Ercule  
 Singing his werkes laude and heigh renoun  
 For in his tyme of strength he bar þe flour  
 he slough and rafte þe skyn fro þe leoun 3288  
 he of Centaures layde þe bost a doun  
 he arpies slough þe cruel briddes felle  
 The gold appul he raft fro þe dragoun  
 he drof out cerbures þe fend of helle 3292

He slough þe cruel tyrant bupherus  
 And made his hors to frete him fleisch and boon  
 he slough þe verray serpent venencus  
 Of Adiloyus tuo hornes he raft oon 3296  
 he slough Catus in a caue of stoon  
 he slough þe geaunt adeus þe stronge  
 he slough þe grisly leoun and þat anoon  
 And bar þe heed vpon his necke longe 3300



Was neuer wight / sippen þe world bigan  
 That slough so many monstres as dede he  
 Thurgh-out þe wide world his name ran  
 what for his strengþe and for his bounte 3304  
 And euery roialme went he for to se  
 he was so strong þer might no man him lette  
 At boþe þe worldes endes as saith trophe  
 In stede of boundes he a piler sette 3308

A lemman hadde þis noble campioun [leaf 229]  
 That highte Deianire freissh as may  
 And as þese clerkes maken mencion  
 Sche hap him sent a schurte fresch and gay 3312  
 Alas þis schirt alas and wailaway  
 Enuenymed was sople with alle  
 That er he hadde wered it half a day  
 It made his fleisch al fro his bones falle / 3316

But natheles som clerkes hir excusen  
 By oon þat highte Nessus þat it makyd  
 Be as be may I wil nouȝt hir accusyn  
 But on his bak / he wered þis schirt al naked 3320  
 Til þat his fleisch was for þe venym blaked  
 And whan he saugh noon oper remedye  
 In hote colis he hap himself I-raked  
 For no venym deynd him to dye 3324

Thus starf þis mighty and worthy Ercules  
 lo who may truste fortune eny þrowe  
 For him þat folweþ al þis world of þres  
 Er he be war is oft y-layd ful lowe / 3328  
 Ful wys is he þat / can himseluen knowe /  
 Be war for whan þat fortune lust to glose /  
 Than waytith sche hir man to ouerþrowe /  
 By suche way as he wolde lest suppose 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

The mighty trone þe precious tresor ¶ De rege  
 The glorious ceptre and real mageste Nabugodonosor  
 That had þe king Nabugodonosore  
 wip tonge vnnethes may descryued be 3336  
 he twyes wan ierusalem þat Cite  
 The vessel out of þe temple he wip him ladde / ¶ Danielis 4<sup>th</sup>  
 At Babiloyne was his souereyn see regum &c  
 In which his glorie and his delyt he ladde / 3340

The fairest children of þe blood roial  
 Of Israel he dede gelde anoon  
 And made ylk of hem to ben his þral  
 Amonges opre Daniel was oon 3314  
 That was þe wisest/ child of euerychoon  
 For he þe dremes of þe king expounded  
 Ther as in Caldeyn was þer clerkes noon [seq/ 329, back]  
 That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned 3348

This proude king let make a statu of gold  
 Sixty cubites long and seuen in brede  
 To which ymage boþe yonge and olde /  
 Comaunded he to loue and haue in drede 3352  
 Or in a fornays ful of flames rede  
 he schulde be brent þat wolde not obeye /  
 But neuer wolde assente to þat dede  
 Danyel ne his felawes tweye 3356

This king of kinges preu was elate  
 he wende god þat sit in mageste  
 Ne might him nought / bireue of his estate  
 But sodeynly he left/ his dignite 3360  
 I-lik a best him semed for to be  
 And eet hay as an oxe and lay þer-oute /  
 In rayn with wilde bestes walkyd he.  
 [til certain tyme was i-come aboute<sup>1</sup>] [<sup>1</sup> In margin, is a later hand.]

And lik/ an Eglis fetheres were his heres  
 his hondes like a briddes clowes were  
 Til god relested him a certeyn 3eres  
 And 3af him witte and panne with many a tere 3368  
 he þanked god and euer he is afere  
 To doon amys or more to trespace  
 And er þat tyme he layd was on bere  
 he knew wel god was ful of might and grace 3372

His sone which þat highte Balthazar  
 That huld þe regne after his fader day  
 he by his fader coupe nought be war  
 For proud he was of hert/ and of array 3376  
 And eek an ydolaster was he ay  
 his heigh astate assured him in pryde  
 But fortune cast him down and þer he lay  
 And sodeynly his regne gan diuide 3380

A fest he made vnto his lordes alle  
 vpon a tyme he made hem bliþe be  
 And þan his officeres gan he calle  
 Gop bringeth forth þe vessealx quod he 3384  
 The which my fader in his prosperite  
 Out of þe temple of ierusalem byraft [leaf 230]  
 And to oure hihe goddis þanke we/  
 Of honours þat oure eldres with vs laft 3388

His wif his lordes and his concubines  
 Ay dronken whiles her arriont last  
 Out of þis noble vesseals sondry wynes  
 And on a wal þis king his yhen cast / 3392  
 And saugh an hond armles þat wroot fast /  
 For fere of which he quook and siked sore  
 þis hond þat balthazar so sore agast  
 wrot . mane . techel . phares . and no more / 3396

In al þe lond magicien was noon  
 That couþe expounde what þis lettre ment  
 But Daniel expoundiþ it anoon  
 And sayde king' god þy fader sent 3400  
 Glori and honour . regne tresor and rent  
 And he was proud and no þing' god ne dredde  
 And þerfor god gret' wreche vpon him sent'  
 And him biraft' þe regne þat' he hadde / 3404

He was out cast' of mannes compaignye  
 with asses was his habitacioun  
 And eete hay in wet' and eek' in drye  
 Til þat' he knew by grace and by resoun 3408  
 That god of heuen had dominacioun  
 Ouer euery regne and euery creature  
 And þan had god of him compassioun  
 And him restored to his regne and his figure 3412

Eke þou þat' art' his sone art' proud also  
 And knowest' al þis þing' so verrayly  
 And art' rebel to god and art' his fo  
 þou dronk' eek' of his vessel bodily 3416  
 Thy wyf' eek' and þy wenche sinfully  
 Dronke of þe same vessel sondry wyne  
 And heriest' false goddes cursedly  
 Therefore to þe schapen ful gret pyne es 3420

This hond was send fro god þat' on þe wal  
 wrot . mane . techel . phares truste me  
 Thy regne is doon þou weist' nouȝt at' al  
 Diuidid is þy regne and it schal be [leaf 230, back] 3424  
 To meedes and to perses ȝeuen quod he  
 And þilke same night' þe king' was slawe  
 And Darius occupied his degre  
 þough þerto neyþer had he right' ne lawe / 3428

Lordyngs ensample her-by may ȝe take  
 how þat in lordschip is no sikernesse  
 For whan fortune wil a man forsake  
 Sche bereþ a-way his regne and his richesse / 3432  
 And eek his frendes boþe more and lesse /  
 And what man hath of frendes þe fortune  
 Mishap wil make hem enemyes I gesse  
 [þis prouerbe is ful soth & ful comune<sup>1</sup>]

[<sup>1</sup> In a later hand  
in the margin.]

[No break in the MS.]

Cenobia of palmire þe queene  
 As writen parciens of hir noblesse  
 So worþy was in armes and so keene  
 That no wight passed hir in hardynesse 3440  
 Ne in lynage ne in oþer gentilesse /  
 Of þe kinges blood / of pers sche is descendid  
 I say þat sche had not most fairnesse  
 But of hir schap sche might not ben amendid 3444

Fro hir childhod / I fynde þat sche fledde  
 Office of wommen and to woode sche went  
 And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde  
 with arwes brode þat sche to hem sent / 3448  
 Sche was so swyft þat sche anon hem hent  
 And whan þat sche was elder sche wolde kille  
 Leouns / lebardes / and beres alto-rent  
 And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille 3452

Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke/  
 And renne in þe mounteyns al þe night  
 And slepe vnder a bussch and sche coupe eke  
 wrastil by verray fors and verray might 3456  
 wip eny ȝong man were he neuer so wight  
 Ther mighte no þing in hir armes stonde  
 She kept hir maydenhed from euery wight  
 To no man deyned hire to be bonde 3460

But atte last hir frendes han hir married  
 To Odenake a prince of þat Citee  
 Al were it so þat sche him longe taried [122/231]  
 And 3e schul vnderstonde how þat he 3464  
 had suche fantasies as hadde sche /  
 But napeles whan þay were knyȝt in fere  
 Thay lyued in ioie and in felicite  
 For ech of hem had oþer leef and deere 3468

Saue oon þing sche wolde neuer assent  
 By no way þat he schulde by hir lye  
 But oones for it was hir playn entent  
 To haue a child þe world to multiplie 3472  
 And also soone as she might aspye /  
 That sche was not wip childe ȝit in dede /  
 Than wold sche suffre him doon his fantasie  
 Eft sones and nought but oones out of drede / 3476

And if sche were wip child at pilke cast  
 No more schuld he playe pilke game  
 Til fully fourty dayes were y-past  
 Than wold sche suffre him to do þe same 3480  
 Al were þis Odenake wilde or tame  
 he gat no more of hir for þus sche sayde  
 hit nas but wyues lecchery and schame /  
 In oþer caas if þat/ men with hem playde / 3484

Tuo sones by þis Odenak had sche  
 The which sche kept/ in vertu and lettrure  
 But now vnto our purpos torne we  
 I say so worschipful a creature 3488  
 And wys. worpy. and large with mesure  
 So penyble in þe werre and curteys eeke  
 Ne more labour might in werre endure /  
 was no wher noon in al þis world to seeke 3492

Hir riche array if it might be told  
 As wel in vessel as in hir cloping  
 Sche was al cloped in perre and gold  
 And eek sche lafte nought for hir huntynge 3496  
 To haue of sondry tonges ful knowing  
 whan sche had leyser // and might perto entent  
 To lerne bookes was al hir likyng  
 How sche in vertu might hir lif despent 3500

And schortly of pis story for to trete [leaf 231, back]  
 So doughty was hir housbond and eek sche  
 That pay conquered many regnes grete  
 In thorient with many a fair citee 3504  
 Appurtient vnto that mageste /  
 Of Rome . and with strong hond hulden hem fast  
 Ne neuer might her fomen doon hem fle  
 Ay while Odenakes dayes last/ 3508

Her batails who / so lust hem for to rede  
 Agayn Sapor þe king and oper mo  
 And how þat pis processe fel in dede  
 why sche conquered and what title had perto 3512  
 And after of hir meschief and hir woo /  
 how þat sche was deceyued and I-take /  
 let hem vnto my mayster perark go  
 That writeth of pis ynough I vndertake / 3516

Whan Odenake was deed sche mightily  
 The regnes huld and wip hir propre hond  
 Azeins hir foos sche faught ful trewely  
 That þer nas king ne prince in þat lond 3520  
 That he nas glad if he þat grace fond  
 That sche ne wold vpon his lond werraye  
 with hir pay made alliaunce by bond  
 To ben in pees and let hir ryde and play 3524

The emperour of Rome Claudius  
 Ne him biforn þe romayn· Galiene  
 Ne dorste neuer be so corrageous  
 Ne noon ermine ne Egipcienne 3528  
 No Surrien ne noon arrabiene  
 wipinne þe feld þat durste with hir fight  
 Lest þat sche wold hem wip her hondes sleen  
 Or wip hir meyne putten hem to flight 3532

In kinges abytt went hir sones tuo  
 As heires of her fadres regnes alle  
 And hermanno and Themaleo  
 here names were and Parciens men hem calle / 3536  
 But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle  
 This mighty queene may no while endure  
 Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle [1005/232]  
 To wrecchednesse and to mys aduenture 3540

Aurilian whan þat þe gouernaunce  
 Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tway /  
 he schop him of þis queen to do vengeaunce /  
 And with his legiouns he took þe way 3544  
 Toward Cenoby and schortly to say  
 he made hir flee and atte last hir hent  
 And feterid hir and eek hir children tweye  
 And wan þe lond and home to Rome he went 3548

Amonges oper þinges þat he wan  
 hir chaar þat was wip gold wrougt and perre  
 This grete Romayn þis aurilian  
 hath with him lad for þat men schulde se 3552  
 Bifore þis triumphe walkith sche /  
 And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongynge  
 Coroun sche was as aftir hir degre  
 [and ful of perre chargid here clothyng<sup>1</sup>] <sup>[<sup>1</sup> In a later hand in the margin.]</sup>



Allas fortune . sche that whilom was  
Dredful to kinges and to Emperoures  
Now gaulith al þe pepul on hir alas  
And sche þat helmyd was in starke stoures / 3560  
And wan bifore tounes stronge and toures  
Schal on heed now were a wyntermyte  
And sche þat bar þe cepter ful of floures  
Schal bere a distaf hir self for to quyte 3564

[No break in the MS.]

O noble petro . þe glori of Spayne / ¶ De petro his-  
whom fortune held so heigh in mageste pannie rege  
wel oughte men þy pitous dep complayne  
Thy bastard broþer made þe to fle 3568  
And after / at a sege by subtilte  
þow were bytrayed and lad to his tent  
wher / as he with his oughne hond slough þe  
Succedyng in þy lond and in þy rent 3572

The feld of snow with thegle of blak þer-Inne  
Caught wip þe leoun reed coloured as is þe gleede  
he brewede þe cursednesse and synne  
The wikked nest werker of þis neede 3576  
Nought Oliuer ne Charles þat ay took heede  
Of trouthe and honour but / of armoryk [leaf 232, back]  
Geniloun oliuer corruptid for nede  
Broughte þis worþy king in such a bryk 3580

[No break in the MS.]

O worþy petro king of Cipres also ¶ De petro Cypre rege  
That alisaunder wan by heigh maistrye /  
Ful many an hethen wroughtest þou ful wo  
Of which þin oughne lieges had enuye 3584  
And for no þing but for þy chivalrie  
þay in thy bed han slayn þe by þe morwe  
Thus can fortune þe whel gouerne and gye  
And out of ioye bringe men in to sorwe 3588

[No break in the MS.]

Of Melayn grete Barnabo viscount ¶ De Barnabo Co-  
 God of delyt and strength of lumbardy mite Mediolano  
 why schuld þyn infortune I nough accounte

Syn in astat þou clombe were so hye 3592

Thy broþer sone þat was þy double allie

For he þy neuew was and sone in lawe

wipinne his prisoun made þe to dye

But why ne how not I þat þou were slawe / 3596

[No break in the MS.]

Of erl hugilin of pise þe langour ¶ De hugilino  
 Ther may no tonge telle þe pite Comite Pise

But litel out of pise stant a tour

In whiche tour / in prisoun put was he / 3600

And with him been his litil children þre

Theldest skarsly fyf 3er was of age /

Allas fortune it was gret cruelte

Suche briddes to put in such a cage 3604

Dampnyd he was to deye in þat prisoun

For Roger which þat bisschop was of pise

Had on him maad a fals suggestioun

Thurgh which þe peple gan on him arise 3608

And putte him in prisoun in such wise

As 3e han herd and mete and drynk he hadde

So smal þat wel vnneþe it may suffise

And þer wip al it was ful pore and badde 3612

And on a day bifel þat in þat hour

whan þat his mete was wont to be brought

The gayler schet þe dores of þat tour

He herd it wel but he saugh it nought [1601/233] 3616

And in his hert anon þer fel a þought

þat þay for hungir wolde doon him dyen

Alas quod he allas þat I was wrought

Ther-wip þe teeres felle fro his eyen 3620

## GROUP B. § 12. MONK'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 547

His 3ongest' sone þat' þre 3er was of' age  
 Vnto him sayde fader why do ye wepe  
 whan wil þe gayler bringen oure potage  
 Is þer no morsel bred þat' 3e doon kepe 3624  
 I am so hongry þat' I may not sleepe  
 Now wolde god þat' I might slepe euer  
 Than schuld not' hunger in my wombe crepe  
 Ther is no þing' saue bred þat' me were leuer 3628

Thus day by day þis child bigan to crie  
 Til in his fadres barm a-doun he lay  
 And sayde far wel fader I moot' dye  
 And kist' his fader and dyde þe same day 3632  
 And whan þe woful fader deed it say  
 For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte  
 And sayde fortune alas and waylaway  
 Thin false querel al my woo I wyte 3636

His childer wende þat' it' for hongir was  
 That' he his armes gnew and nought' for wo  
 And sayden fader do nought' so allas  
 But' rather et' þe fleisch vpon vs tuo 3640  
 Oure fleisch þou 3ane vs / oure fleisch þou take vs fro  
 And ete ynough right' þus þay to him seyde  
 And after þat' wipinne a day or tuo  
 Thay layde hem in his lappe a-doun and deyde 3644

Himself' despeired eek' for hunger starf'  
 Thus ended is þis mighty eorl of' pise  
 For his estate fortune fro him carf'  
 Of' þis tegrede it' ought' ynough suffise / 3648  
 who-so wil it hiere in lenger wise  
 Rede þe gret' poet' of' Itaile  
 That' highte Daunt' for he can it deuise  
 Fro poynt to poynt nou3t' oon word wil he fayle 3652

[No break in the MS.]

Al þough Nero were als vicious ¶ De Nerone

As any fend that lith ful lowe adoun [leaf 232, back]

3it as tellith vs Swethoneus

This wyde world had in subieccioun 3656

Bope Est and west and Septemtrioun

Of rubies . safers . and of perles white

were alle his clopes embroudid vp and down

For he in gemmis / gretly gan delite 3660

More delyt . more pomp of array

Mor proud was neuer Emperour þan he

That ylke cloth þat he had wered a day

After þat tyme he nolde it neuer se 3664

Nettis of gold þred . had he gret plente

To fische in tyber whan him lust to pleye

his willes were as lawe in his degre

For fortune as his frend wold him obeye 3668

He Rome brent for his delicacie

The senatours he slough vpon a day

To here how men wolde wepe and crye

And slough his broþer . and by his suster lay 3672

his modir made he in pitous array

For hir wombe slyt he to byholde

wher he conceyued so waylaway /

þat he so litel of his moodir tolde 3676

No teer out of his eyen for þat sight /

Ne cam but sayde a fair womman was sche

Gret wonder is þat he couþe or might

Be domesman on hir beaute 3680

The wyn to bringen him comaundid he

And drank anon noon oþer wo he made

whan might is torned vnto cruelte

Allas to deepe wil þe venym wade / 3684

IN ȝouȝe a maister had þis emperour  
 To teche him letterure and curtesye  
 For of moralite he was þe flour  
 And in his tyme but if þe book lye 3688  
 And whil his maister had of him maistrie  
 he made him so connyng and so souple /  
 That long tyme it was or tyrranye  
 Or ony vice dorst on him vncouple / [leaf 234] 3692

This Seneca of which þat I deuyse ¶ Seneca  
 By cause Nero had of him such drede  
 For fro vices he wolde him chastise  
 Discretly by word and nouȝt by dede / 3696  
 Sir wold he sayn an emperour mot neede /  
 Be vertuous and hate tyrannye  
 For which he in a bath made him to bleede  
 On boȝe his armes til he moste dye 3700

The nero hadde eek a custumance /  
 No ȝouȝe aȝein his maister for to ryse /  
 which afterward him þought a gret greuaunce  
 Therefore he made him deye in þis wise 3704  
 But napeles þis Seneca þe wise  
 Ches in bath to deye in þis manere /  
 Raper þan to haue anoȝer tyrannye  
 And þus haȝ Nero slayn his maister deere / 3708

Now fel it so þat fortune lust no lenger  
 The highe pride of Nero to cherice  
 For þough he were strong ȝit was sche strengier  
 Sche þoughte þus by god I am to nyce 3712  
 To set a man þat is ful sad of vice  
 In high degre and emperour him calle /  
 By god out of his cite I wil him trice  
 whan he lest wenep sonnest schal byfalle 3716

The poeple ros on him vpon a night  
 For heigh defaute and whan he it aspyed  
 Out of his dores anon he hap him dight  
 Aloone and þer he wende haue ben allyed 3720  
 he knocked fast and ay þe more he cried  
 The faster schette þay þe doores alle/  
 Than wist he wel he had himself mysgyed  
 And went his way no lenger durst he calle 3724

The peple cried and rumbled vp and doun  
 That with his eris herd he how þay sayde  
 Wher is þis fals traitour þis neroun  
 For fere almost out of his witte he brayde / 3728  
 And to his goddes pitously he prayde /  
 For socour but it mighte nought betyde / [leaf 224, back]  
 For drede of þis him þoughte þat he dyde  
 And ran in to a gardyn hym to hyde 373

And in þis gardyn fond he cherlis twaye  
 Sittyng by a fuyr ful greet and reed  
 And to þese che[r]les tuo he gan to pray  
 To sleen him and to girden of his heed 3736  
 That to his body whan he were deed  
 were despyt y-doon for his defame  
 himself he slough he couþe no better reed  
 Of which fortune þai lough and hadde game / 3740  
 [No break in the MS.]

Was neuer Capitaigne vnder a king / ¶ De Olipherno  
 Thas regnes mo put in subieccioun  
 Ne strenger was in feld of alle þing  
 As in his tyme ne gretter of renoun 3744  
 Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun  
 Than Oliphern. which þat fortune ay kist  
 So licorously. and ladde him vp and doun  
 Til that his heed was of er he it wist 3748

Nought oonly þat þe world had of him awe /  
 For lesyng of riches and liberte  
 But made euery man reneye his lawe /  
 Nabugodonosor was lord sayde he / 3752  
 Noon oþer god schuld honoured be

Azeinst his heste dar no wight trespase ¶ Et fecerunt filij  
 Saue in Betholia a strond cite israel secundum  
 wher Eliachim a prest of þat place quod constituit eis  
 dominus sacerdos  
 Elyachym

But tak keep of þat day of Olipherne  
 Amyd his ost/ he dronke lay on night  
 wipinne his tente large as is a berne  
 And ȝit for al his pomp and al his might 3760  
 Iudith a womman as he lay vpright  
 Slepynge his heed of smot and fro his tent  
 Ful priuely sche stal from euery wight  
 And with his heed vnto hir toun sche went 3764

[No break in the MS.]

What needith it of king antiochius ¶ De Rege Anti-  
 To telle his heye real mageste / ochie illustri.  
 his heyhe pride his werke venemous  
 For such anoper was þer noon as he [leaf 235] 3768  
 Redep which þat he was in machabe  
 And redith þe proude wordes þat he sayde  
 And why he fel fro his prosperite  
 And in an hil. how wrecchidly he deyde 3772

Fortune him hap enhaunced so in pryde  
 That verrailly he wend he might han teyned  
 Vnto þe sterris vpon euery syde /  
 And in a balaunce weyen what ech mounteyned 3776  
 And alle þe floodes of þe see restreyne  
 And goddes peple had he most in hate  
 hem wold he slee in torment and in peyne  
 wenynge þat god ne might his pride abate 3780

And for þat Nichosor and Thimothe /  
 with Iewes were venquist/ mightily  
 Vn to þe Iewes such an hate had he /  
 That he bad graithe his chaar hastily 3784  
 And swor and sayde ful despitously  
 Vnto Ierusalem he wold eft soone  
 To wreke his Ire on it ful cruelly  
 But of his purpos he was let ful soone 3788

God for his manace him so sore smoot  
 wip innisible wounde. incurable  
 That in his guttes carf so and bot  
 That his peynes were importable 3792  
 And certeynly þe wreche was resonable  
 For on many a man. dede he peyne  
 But fro his purpos cursed and dampnable /  
 For al his smert he nolde him nought restreyne / 3796

But bad anon apparailen his host  
 And sodeynly er he was of it ware  
 God dampned al his pride and al his bost  
 For he so sore fel out of his chare 3800  
 That his lymes and his skyn to-tare /  
 So þat he no more might go ne ryde /  
 But in a chare men aboute him bare /  
 Al forbrosed boþe bak and syde / 3804

The wreche of god him smot so cruelly  
 That in his body wicked wormes crept [leaf 225, back]  
 And þer with al he stonk/ so horribly  
 That noon of his meyne þat him kep[t]e 3808  
 wheper þat he wook or elles slepte  
 Ne mighte nought þe stynk of him endure  
 In þis meschief he weyled and eek wepte /  
 And knew god lord of euery creature 3812



To al his host and to himself also  
 Ful wlatson was þe stynk and þe carayne  
 No man might him bere to ne fro  
 And in stynk/ and horrible payne 3816

he starf ful wrecchedly in a mountayne  
 Thus hap þis robbour and þis homicide /  
 That many a man made wepe and playne /  
 Swich guerdoun is þat longeþ vnto pryde 3820  
*[No break in the MS.]*

The story of alisaunder is so comune ¶ De alexandro  
 That every wight þat hap discrecioun magno philip-  
 hap herd som what or al of this fortune pi regis mace-  
 Thys wyde world as in conclusioun donie filio &c / 3824  
 he wan by strengþe or for his heigh renoun  
 Thay were glad for pees vnto him sende  
 The pride of man and bost he layd a doun  
 Wher-so he cam. vnto þe worldes ende / 3828

Comparisoun 3it mighte neuer be maked  
 Bitwen him and noon oper conquerour  
 For al þis world for drede of him hap quaked  
 he was of knyghthod and of fredam flour 3832  
 Fortune him made þe heir of hir honour  
 Saue wyn and wymmen no þing might aswage  
 his heigh entent in armes and labour  
 So was he ful of lumyne corage 3836

What pite were it to him þough I 3ow tolde  
 Of Darius and an hundred þousand mo  
 Of kynges princes Dukes and eorles bolde /  
 which he conquered and brouzt/ vnto wo 3840  
 I say as fer as men may ryde or go  
 The world was his what schold I more deuyse /  
*[ . . . . . no gap in the MS.]*  
 Of his knighthood it mighte nouzt suffice / 3844

Twelf<sup>r</sup> 3er he regned as saith machabe [leaf 235]  
 Philippes son of Macedon he was  
 That first was king in Crece pat contre  
 O worpy gentil alisaundre alas 3848  
 That euer schulde falle such a caas  
 Empoysoned of þin oughne folk þou were  
 Thyn fortune is torned in to an aas  
 And right for þe ne wepte sche neuer a teere 3852

Who schal me 3iue teeres to compleigne  
 The dep of gentiles and of fraunchise  
 That al þe worlde had in his demeigne  
 And 3it him þought it mighte nouzt suffice 3856  
 So ful was his corage of high emprise /  
 Allas who schal helpe me to endite/  
 Fals infortune and poyoun to deuyse  
 The whiche two al þis wo I wyte 3860  
[No break in the MS.]

By wisdom manhod and gret labour  
 Fro humble bed to royal mageste /  
 Vp roos he Iulius þe conquerour  
 That wan al thoccident by land and see 3864  
 By strengþe of hond or elles by trete /  
 And vnto Rome made hem contributarie  
 And sippe of Rome þemperour was he  
 Til þat fortune wax his aduersarie / 3868

O mighty Cesar þat in Thessalie  
 Agains pompious fader þin in lawe  
 That of þe orient had al þe chiualrie  
 Als fer as þat þe day bigynnes to dawe 3872  
 Thorugh þi knighthod þou hast him take and slawe  
 Saue fewe folk þat with pompeus fledde  
 þurgh which þou puttist al þorient in awe  
 Thanke fortune þat so wel þe spedde 3876

But now a litel while I wil bywaile  
 This pompeus þe noble gouernour  
 Of Rome which þat flowe fro þis bataile  
 Alas I say oon of his men a fals traitour 3880  
 his heed of smoot to wyne his fauour  
 Of Iulius and him þe heed he brouȝt  
 Alas pomp of þe orient conquerour [leaf 236, back]  
 That fortune to such a fyn þe brought 3884

To Rome agayn repaireþ Iulius  
 wiþ his triumphe laurial ful hye  
 But on a tyme brutus Cassius  
 That euer had to his estat enuye / 3888  
 Ful priuely haþ made conspiracie /  
 Agains þis Iulius in subtil wise /  
 Cast the place. in which he schulde dye  
 with boydekyns as I schal ȝow deuyse / 3892

This Iulius to þe Capitoile went  
 vpon a day as he was wont to goon  
 And in þe Capitoil anoon him hent  
 This false brutus and his oper foon 3896  
 And stiked him wiþ boydekyns anoon  
 with many a wounde and þus þay let him lye  
 But neuer gront he at no strook but oon  
 Or elles at tuo but if þe storie lye 3900

So manly was þis Iulius of hert/  
 And so wel loued estatly honeste  
 That þough his deedly woundes sore smert'  
 his mantil ouer his hipes caste he 3904  
 For no man schulde seen his priuete  
 And as he lay deyinge in a traunce  
 And wiste wel þat verrayly deed was he  
 Of honeste ȝet had he remembraunce / 3908

Lucan to þe þis story I recomende  
 And to Swetoun and to Valirien also  
 That al þe story writen word and ende /  
 how to þese grete conqueroures tuo 3912  
 Fortune was first frend and sippen fo  
 No man trust vpon hir favour longe /  
 But haue hir in awayt for euermo  
 witnesse on alle þise conqueroures stronge 3916  
 [No break in the MS.]

Off riche gresus whilom king of lyde Of which gresus. Cirus him sore dradde / 3et was he caught amyddes al his pride And to þe fuyr to brenne him men him ladde But such a rayn down fro þe heuen schadde <sup>1</sup> That slough þe fuyr and made him to eschape But to be war 3et grace noon he hadde / Til fortune on þe galwes made him gape	¶ Gresus leuit- ici capitulo .ijº de spiritu phitonisse ha- bendo octos iiiiº libro Re- gum capitulo primo [leaf 137]	3924
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Whan he was eschaped he coupe nouzt/ stent  
 For to bygynne a newe werre agayn  
 he wende wel for þat fortune him sent  
 Such hap þat he eschaped purgh þe rayn 3928  
 That of his foes he mighte not be slayn  
 And eek a sweuen vpon a night he mette  
 Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn  
 That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette / 3932

Vpon a tree he was set as him þouzt  
 wher Iubiter him wissch boþe bak and side  
 And phebus eek a fair towail him brouzt  
 To drye him with and þerfore wax his pride 3936  
 And to his douzter þat stood him biside  
 which þat he knew in heigh science abounde /  
 And bad hire telle what it signifyde  
 And sche his dreem right þus gan expounde / 3940

The tree quod sche þe galwes is to mene  
 And Iubiter likenith snow and rayn  
 And phebus with his towail so clene  
 Tho ben þe sonne stremes soþ to sayn 3944  
 Thow schalt' enhangid ben fader certayn  
 Rayn schal þe wasch and sonne schal þe drye  
 Thus warned sche him ful plat and ek ful playn  
 his doughter which þat' called was phanie 3948

'And hanged was Gresus þis proude king  
 his real tour might' him not' anaile /  
 Tegredis ne noon oper maner þing'  
 Ne can in I synge crie ny biwayle 3952  
 But' for þat' fortune wil alway assayle  
 wiþ vnwar strook' þe regnes þat' ben proude  
 For whan men trusteth hir than wil sche faile  
 And couer hir brighte face with a clowde 3956  
 ¶ Here endep þe monk' his tale

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ & here bygynne þe prologe  
of þe Nonne prestes tale. of þe kok' and þe hen.

**H**O sire quod the knight' no more of þis [leaf 237, back]  
That' 3e han said is right' ynough y-wys  
And mochil mor. for litel heuynesse

Is right' I-nough for moche folk' I gesse 3960

I say for me it' is a gret disease

wher as men han ben in gret welþe and ease

To hieren of her sodeyn fal allas

And þe contraire is ioie and gret solas 3964

As whan a man hap ben in pore estate

And clymbith vp and wexeþ fortunate

And þer abydeþ in prosperite

Such þing' is gladsom as þinkith me 3968

And of such þing' were goodly for to telle

3e quod our host' by seinte paules belle

3e say right' soþ þis monk' hap clappid lowde

he spak' how fortune was clipped with a clowde 3972

I not' neuer what' and als of tregedie

Right' now 3e herd and pardy no remedye

It' is for to bywayle or compleyne

That' þat' is doon and also it' is a peyne 3976

As 3e han said to here of heuynesse /

Sire monk' no more of þis. so god 3our soule blesse

3our tale anoyeth al þis compaignie

Such a tale is nouȝt' worth a boterflye 3980

For þer Inne is noon disport' ne game

wherfor sir monk'. damp Pieres by 3our name

I pray 3ow hertly tel vs som what' ellis

For sicurly ner gingling' of þe bellis 3984

þat on 3our bridil hong' on euery syde  
 By heuen king' þat for vs alle dyde  
 I schold er þis han falle doun for sleep  
 Al þough þe slough had neuer ben so deep 3988  
 Than had 3our tale . haue be told in vayn  
 For certeynly as þese clerkes sayn  
 wher as a man may haue noon audience  
 Nought helpith it to tellen his sentence 3992  
 And wel I wot' þe substance is in me  
 If eny þing' schal wel reported be  
 Sir say som what' of huntyng' I 3ow pray [leaf 238]  
 Nay quod þe monk' I haue no lust' to play 3996  
 Now let' another telle as I haue told //  
 Than spak' our ost' wiþ rude speche and bold //  
 And said vnto the nonnes prest anoon //  
 Come ner þou prest' . come ner þou sir Iohn //  
 Tel vs such þing' as may our hertes glade 4000  
 Be bliþe al þough þou ryde vpon a iade //  
 what' þough þin hors be boþe foul and lene //  
 If he wil serue þe rek' not' a bene // 4004  
 lok' þat þin hert' be mery euer mo //  
 3is sire 3is hoste . also mot I go //  
 But' I be mery I-wis I wol be blamed //  
 And right' anoon he hap his tale tamyd // 4008  
 And þus he sayd vnto vs euerich oon //  
 This sweete prest this goodly man sir Iohn ¶ Explicit  
 prologus

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneth the Nonne prest his tale

**A** Pore wydow . som del stōpe in age  
 was whilom duellyng' in a pore cotage 4012  
 Bisyde a groue stondyng' in a dale  
 This wydow of' which I telle ȝow my tale  
 Syn pilke day þat' sche was last' a wif' /  
 In paciens ladde . a ful symple lyf' 4016  
 For litel was hir catel and hir rent  
 By housbondry . of' such as god hir sent  
 Sche fond hir self' and eek' hir doughtres tuo  
 Thre large sowes had sche and no mo 4020  
 Thre kyn . and eek' a scheep þat' highte malle .  
 Ful sooty was hir bour and eek' hir halle  
 In which she eet ful many a sclender meel  
 Of' poynaunt' saws hir needid neuer a deel 4024  
 Noon deynteth morsel passid þorugh hir þrote  
 Hir dyete was accordant' to hir cote  
 Repleccioun ne made hir neuer sik'  
 Attempre dyete was al hir phisik' 4028  
 And exercise and hertes suffisaunce  
 The goute lette hir no þing' for to daunce  
 Ne poplexie schente not' hir heed  
 No wyn ne drank' he noþer whit ne reed [leaf 238, back] 4032  
 Hir bord seruyd boþe with whit' and blak'  
 Milk' and broun bred in which sche fond no lak'  
 Saynd bacoun and som tyme an ey or tweye  
 For sche was as it' were a maner deye 4036  
 A ȝerd sche had enclosed al aboute  
 wip stikkes and a drye dich wipoute  
 In which she had a Cok' þat' hight' Chaunteclere  
 In al þe lond of' crowyng' was noon his peere 4040



His vois was merier þan þe mery Orgon  
 On masse dayes þat in þe chirche goon  
 wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge  
 þan is a Clok or an abbay Orologge 4044  
 By nature knew he ech ascensioun  
 Of equinoxial in þilke toun  
 For whan degrees fyftene were ascendid  
 Thanne crew he it might not ben amendid 4048  
 His comb was redder þan þe fyn coral  
 And batayld as it were a castel wal  
 his bile was blak and as þe geet it schon  
 lik asur were. his legges and his ton 4052  
 His nayles whitter þan þe lily flour  
 And lik þe burnisch gold was his colour  
 This gentil cok had in his gouernaunce  
 Seuen hennes for to do al his plesaunce 4056  
 whiche were his sustres and his paramoures  
 And wonder lik to him as of coloures  
 Of whiche þe fairest hiewed on hir prote  
 was cleped fayre damysel pertilote 4060  
 Curteys sche was discret and debonaire  
 And companable and bar hir self ful faire  
 Syn þilke day þat sche was seuen 3er old  
 That sche hap trewely þe hert in hold 4064  
 Of chaunteclere loken in euery lith  
 He loued hir so þat wel him was þer-with  
 But such a ioye was it to here him synge  
 whan þat þe brighte sonne gan to springe 4068  
 In swete accord my lief is faren on londe  
 Fro þilke tyme as I haue vnderstonde [leaf 239]  
 Bestis and briddes cowde speke and synge  
 And so byfel þat in a dawenyng 4072  
 As Chaunteclere among his wyues alle /  
 Sat on his perche þat was in his halle  
 And next him sat þis faire pertelote  
 This Chauntecler gan gronen in his prote 4076

As man þat' in his dreem is drecched sore /  
 And whan þat' Pertelot' þus herd him rore  
 Sche was agast' and sayde herte deere  
 what eylith 3ow to grone in þis manere 4080  
 3e ben a verray sleper fy for schame  
 And he answerd and sayde þus ma dame  
 I pray 3ow þat' 3e take it nouȝt agreef'  
 By god me mette I was in such meschief' 4084  
 Right' now þat' 3it myn hert/ is sore afright'  
 Now god quod he my sweuen rede aright'  
 And keep my body out' of' foul prisoun  
 Me mette how þat I romed vp and doun 4088  
 wiþinne oure 3erd wher as I saugh a beest/  
 was lik' an hound and wold haue maad arrest/  
 Vpon my body and wold han had me deed  
 His colour was bitwixe 3olow and reed 4092  
 And tipped was his tail and boþe his eeres  
 with blak'/. vnlik' þe remenaunt of' his heres  
 His snowt' was smal with glowynge yen tweye  
 3et' of' his look' / for fer almost' I deye 4096  
 This caused me my gronyng' douteles  
 A way quod sche. fy on 3ow herteles  
 Allas quod sche for by þat' god aboue  
 Now haue 3e lost myn hert' and al my loue 4100  
 I can nought' loue a coward by my feith  
 For certis what' so eny womman seith  
 we alle desiren if' it mighte be  
 To haue housbondes hardy riche and fre 4104  
 And secre and no nygard ne no fool  
 Ne him þat is agast' of' euery tool  
 Ne noon anaunter by þat god aboue  
 How dorst' 3e sayn for schame vnto 3our loue [v 239, 24] 4108  
 That' any þing' might' make 3ow afferd  
 haue 3e no mannes hert and han a berd  
 Allas and can 3e ben agast' of' sweuenys  
 Nought' god wot / but' vanite in sweuen is 4112

Sweuens engendrid ben of replecciouns  
 And often of fume and of complexiouns  
 whan humours ben to abundaunt in a wight  
 Certes þis dreem which ȝe han met to-night 4116  
 Comeþ of þe grete superfluite  
 Of ȝoure reede Colera parde  
 which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes  
 Of arwes and of fuyr with reede beemes 4120  
 Of rede bestis þat þai wil him byte /  
 Of Contek and of whelpis greet and lite  
 Right as þe humour of malencolie  
 Causeþ in sleep ful many a man to crye 4124  
 For fere of beres or of boles blake  
 Or elles blake deueles wol hem take  
 Of oþer humours coupe I telle also  
 That wirken many a man in slep ful woo 4128  
 But I wol passe as light[ly] as I can  
 lo Catoun which þat was so wis a man  
 Sayde he nouȝt þus ne do no force of dremes  
 Now sire quod sche whan we fle fro þise beemes 4132  
 For goddis loue as tak som laxatyf  
 Vp peril of my soule and of my lyf  
 I counsel ȝow þe best I wol not lye  
 [ . . . . . 4136  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]  
 Though in þis toun is noon apotecarie  
 I schal my-self tuo herbes techyn ȝow  
 That schal be for ȝour hele and for ȝoure prow 4140  
 And in oure ȝerd þo herbes schal I fynde  
 The whiche han of her proprete by kynde  
 To purgen ȝow byneþe and eek aboue  
 Forget not þis for goddis oughne loue 4144  
 ȝe ben ful colerik of complexioun  
 ware þe sonne in his ascencioun  
 Ne fynd ȝow not/ replet in humours hote  
 And if it do I dar wel lay a grote [leaf 240] 4148

That 3e schul haue a feuer terciane  
 Or an agu þat may be 3oure bane  
 A day or tuo 3e schul haue digestiues  
 Of wormes er 3e take 3our laxatiues 4152  
 Of lauriol Century and fumytere  
 Or elles of Elder bery þat growith þere /  
 Of Catapus or of gaytre berijs  
 Of erbe yue growep in our 3erd þer mery is 4156  
 Pike hem vpright as þay growe and et hem In  
 Be mery housbond for 3our fader kyn  
 Dredip non dremes I can say no more  
 Ma dame quod he graunt mercy of 3our lore 4160  
 But napeles as touching daun Catoun  
 That hath of wisdom such a gret renoun  
 Though þat he bad no dremes for to drede  
 By god men may in olde bookes rede 4164  
 Of many a man more of auctorite  
 That euer catoun was so mot I the  
 That al þe reuers sayn of his sentence  
 And han wel founden by experience 4168  
 That dremes ben significaciouns  
 As wel of ioye as of tribulaciouns  
 That folk enduren in þis lif present  
 Ther nedeth make of þis noon argument 4172  
 The verray preue schewith it in dede  
 Oon of þe grettest auctorite þat men rede  
 Saith þus · þat whilom tway felawes wente  
 On pylgrimage in a ful good entente / 4176  
 And happed so þay com in to a toun  
 wher as þer was such congregacioun  
 Of people and eek so streyt of herbergage  
 þat þay foud nouȝt as moche as oon cotage / 4180  
 In which þat þay might bope I-logged be  
 wherfor þay mosten of necessite  
 As for þat night depart her compaignye  
 And ech of hem goþ to his hostelrye 4184

And took' his loggyng' as it wolde falle  
 That' oon of hem was loggid in a stalle [leaf 240, back]  
 Fer in a 3erd with oxen of þe plough  
 That' oþer man was logged wel ynough 4188  
 As was his aduenture or fortune  
 That' vs gouernith alle in comune  
 And so bifel þat' long' er it' were day  
 This oon met' in his bed þer as he lay 4192  
 how þat' his felaw gan vpon him calle  
 And sayd alas for in an oxe stalle /  
 This night' I schal be murdrid þer I lye  
 Now help me deere broþer or I dye 4196  
 In alle cum to me he sayde  
 This man out of his slep for fer abrayde  
 But' whan þat' he was waked out of his sleep  
 he torned him and took' of þis no keep 4200  
 him þought' him dreem nas but a vanite /  
 Thus twies in his sleepe dremed he  
 And at/ þe þridde tyme 3et his felawe  
 Com as him þought' and sayd I am now slawe 4204  
 Bihold my bloody woundes deep and wyde  
 Arise vp erly in þe morwe tyde /  
 And at the west' gate of þe toun quod he /  
 A cart' of donge þere schalt' þou see 4208  
 In which my body is hyd priuely  
 Do þilke cart' arresten boldely  
 My gold caused my mourdre soþ to sayn  
 And told him euery poynt' how he was slayn 4212  
 with a ful pitous face pale of hewe  
 And truste wel his dreem he fond ful trewe /  
 For on þe morwe as sone as it was day  
 To his felawes In he took' þe way 4216  
 And whan þat' he cam to þis oxe stalle  
 After his felaw he bigan to calle /  
 The hostiller answered him anoon  
 And sayde sire 3our felaw is agoon 4220

Als soone as day he went/ out of þe toun  
 This man gan falle in a suspeccioun  
 Remembring on his dremes þat he mette /  
 And forth he goth no lenger wold he lette [leaf 241] 4224  
 Vnto þe west gate of þe toun and fond  
 A dong cart went as it were to donge lond  
 That was arrayed in þe same wise  
 As 3e han herd þe deede man deuise / 4228  
 And with an hardy hert he gan to crie  
 Vengeaunce and iustice of þis felonye  
 My felaw mordrid is þis same night  
 And in þis carte. he lith heer vpright 4232  
 I crye out on þe ministres quod he /  
 That schulde kepe and reule þis Cite  
 harrow allas her lith my felaw slayn  
 what schold I more vnto þis tale sayn 4236  
 The peple vpstert and caste þe carte to grounde /  
 And in þe myddes of þe dong þay founde  
 The dede man þat mordred was al newe /  
 O blisful god þou art ful iust and trewe 4240  
 Lo how þow bywreyest mordre al day  
 Mordre wil out certes it is no nay  
 Morder is so wlatson and abhominable  
 To god that is so iust and resonable 4244  
 That he ne wold nouzt suffre it hiled be  
 Though it abyde a 3eer or tuo or þre  
 Morder wil out þis is my conclusioun  
 And right anoon þe mynistres of þat toun 4248  
 Han hent þe carter and so sore him pyned  
 And eek the hostiller so sore engyned  
 That þay biknew her wikkednes anoon  
 And were anhonged by þe nekke boon 4252  
 Here may men se þat dremys ben to drede  
 And Certes in þe same book I rede  
 Right in þe nexte Chapitre after þis  
 I gabbe nought so haue I ioye or bliss 4256

Tuo men þat wolde haue passed ouer see /  
 For certeyn causes in-to fer cuntre  
 If þat þe wynd ne hadde ben contrarie  
 That/ made hem in a Cite for to tarie 4260  
 That stood ful mery vpon an hauen syde /  
 But on a day agayn þe euen tyde [leaf 241, back]  
 The wynd gan chaunge and [blew] right as him list  
 Iolyf and glad þey wenter vnto rest 4264  
 And casten hem ful erly for to sayle  
 But herkneþ to þat oon man fel a gret meruayle  
 That oon of hem in his slepyng as he lay  
 him met a wonder drem a-gayn þe day 4268  
 him þought a man stood by his beddes syd  
 And him comaunded þat he schuld abyde  
 And sayd him þus if þou to morwe wende  
 Thow schalt be dreynt my tale is at an ende 4272  
 ¶ He wook and told his felaw what he mette  
 And prayde him his viage to lette  
 As for þat day he prayd him to abyde  
 his felaw þat lay by his beddis syde 4276  
 Gan to lawgh and scorned him ful fast  
 No dreem quod he may so myn herte gaste /  
 That I wil lette for to do my þinges  
 I sette not a straw by þy dremynges 4280  
 For sweuens been but vanitees and iapes  
 Men dreme al day of owles and of apes  
 And eke of many a mase þer with al  
 Men dreme of þinges þat neuer be schal 4284  
 But sith I see þat þou wilt her abyde /  
 And þus forslouthe wilfully þy tyde  
 God wot it reweth me and haue good day  
 And þus he took his leue and went his way 4288  
 But er he hadde half his cours I-sayled  
 Noot I nouȝt why. ne what meschaunce it ayled  
 But casuelly þe schippes bothom rent  
 And schip and man vnder þe watir went 4292

In sight of oþer schippes þer byside  
 That with him sailed at þe same tyde  
 And þerfore faire pertelot so deere  
 By such ensamples olde maistow leere 4296  
 That no man scholde be to recheles  
 Of dremes for I say þe douteles  
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede  
 Lo in þe lif of seint/ kenelm I rede [leaf 242] 4300  
 That was kenulphus sone þat noble king  
 Of mertinrike how kenilm mette a þing  
 A lutil he was mordred vpon a day  
 His mordre in his auysioun he say 4304  
 His norice him expounded euerydel  
 His sweuen and bad him for to kepe him wel  
 For traisoun for he nas but seuen 3er old  
 And þerfore litel tale hap he told 4308  
 Of eny drem so holy was his hert  
 By god I hadde leuer þan my schert  
 þat 3e had rad his legend as haue I  
 Dame pertelot I say 3ow trewely 4312  
 Macrobius þat writ þe avisioun  
 In auffrik of þe worþy Cipiou  
 Affermeþ dremes and saith þat þay been  
 Warnyng of þinges þat men after seen 4316  
 And forþermore I pray 3ow lokeþ wel  
 In þe olde testament of Daniel  
 If he huld dremes eny vanyte /  
 Rede eek of Ioseph and þer schal 3e see / 4320  
 wheþir dremes ben som tyme I say nought alle  
 warnyng of þinges þat schul after falle  
 Lok of Egipt þe king daun pharao  
 his baker and his botiler also 4324  
 whethir þay felte noon effect in dremis  
 who-so wol seke actes of sondry remys  
 May rede of dremes many a sondry þing  
 Lo Cresus which þat was of lydes king 4328



## GROUP B. § 14. NUN'S-PRIEST'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 569

Mette þat he sat vpon a tre  
 which signified he schuld hanged be /  
 Lo hir andromachia Ectors wif  
 That day þat Ector schulde lese his lif 4332  
 Sche dremed on þe same night byforn  
 how þat þe lif of Ector schulde be lorn  
 If þilke day he wente to batayle /  
 Sche warned him but it might nouȝt auaile / 4336  
 He wente forþ to fighte napeles  
 But he was slayn anon of achilles [leaf 242, back]  
 But þilke tale is al to long to telle/  
 And eek/ it is neigh day I may not duelle 4340  
 Schortly I say as for conclusioun  
 That I schal haue of þis anisioun  
 Aduersite and I say forþermore  
 That I ne telle of laxatifs no store 4344  
 For þay ben venemous I wot it wel  
 I hem defye I loue hem neuer a del  
 Now let vs speke of mirthe and lete al þis  
 Madame pertilot so haue I blis 4348  
 Of o þing god haþ me sent large grace  
 For whan I see þe beaute of ȝour face  
 ȝe ben so scarlet hiew about ȝour eyzen  
 hit makith al my drede for to deyzen 4352  
 For als siker as In principio  
 Mulier est hominis confusio  
 Madame þe sentence of þis latyn is  
 womman is mannes ioie and mannes blis 4356  
 For when I fiele a-night ȝour softe syde /  
 Al be it þat I may not on ȝou ryde  
 For þat ȝour perche is mad so narrow allas /  
 I am so ful of ioie and solas 4360  
 That I defye boþ sweuen and drem  
 And with þat word he fleigh down fro þe beem  
 For it was day and eek his hennes alle  
 with a chuk. he gan hem for to calle / 4364

For he had found a corn lay in þe 3erd  
 Real he was he was nomore aferd  
 he fetherid pertelote . twenty tyme  
 And trad as ofte er þat' it' was prime 4368  
 he lokith as it were a grim lioun  
 And on his toon he romeþ vp and down  
 him deyneth not' to set' his foot' to grounde  
 And chukkip whan he hap a corn I-founde 4372  
 And to him rennen þan his wifes alle  
 Thus real as a prince is in his halle  
 ¶ Leue I þis Chauntecler in his pasture  
 And after wol I telle his aduenture [leaf 213] 4376  
 whan þat' þe moneth in which þe world bigan  
 That' highte march whan god maked first' man  
 was complet' and passed were also  
 Syn march bygan tway monþes and dayes tuo 4380  
 Byfett þat' Chauntecler in al his pride  
 His seuen wyues walkyng' by his syde  
 Cast' vp his eyzen to þe brighte sonne  
 That' in þe signe of' Taurus had I-ronne 4384  
 Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more  
 And knew by kynde and by noon oper lore  
 þat' it' was prime and crew with blisful steuen  
 The sonne he sayde . is clomben vpon heuen 4388  
 Twenty degrees and oon and som what' more I-wis  
 Ma dame pertelot' my worldes blis  
 Herknith þese blisful briddes how þay synge /  
 And seth þese freissche floures how þay springe 4392  
 Ful is myn hert' of' reuel and solaas  
 But' sodeinly him fel a sorwful kaas  
 For euer þe latter end of' ioye is wo  
 God wot' þat' worldly ioye is soone ago 4396  
 And if' [a] Rethor coupe faire endite  
 hem a Cronique saufly might' he write  
 As for a souerayn notabilite ¶ Petrus comestor  
 Now euery wys man let' him herkne me 4400

This story is also trewe I vndertake  
 As þe book' is of Launcelot' þe lake  
 That' womman huld in ful gret' reuerence  
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence 4404  
 A Colefox ful / sleigh of' iniquite  
 That' in þe groue had woned 3eres þre  
 By heigh ymaginacioun forncast'  
 The same nighte þurgh þe hegge brast' 4408  
 In to þe 3erd þer Chaunteclere þe faire  
 was went' and eek' his wyues to repaire  
 And in a bed of' wortes stille he lay  
 Til it was passed vndern of' þe day 4412  
 waytyng' his tyme on Chaunteclere to falle /  
 As gladly doon þese homicides alle [leaf 213, back]  
 That' in awayte lyn to morthur men  
 O false morderer lurking' in þy den 4416  
 O newe Scariot newe Genilon  
 Fals dissimilour . greke Synon  
 That' broughtest' troye al outrely to sorwe  
 O Chauntecler . O cursed be þe morwe 4420  
 That' þou in to þe 3erd flough fro þe bemys  
 Thow were ful wel I-warned by þy dremys  
 That' pilke day was perilous to þe  
 But' what' þat' god forwot' most' needes be / 4424  
 After þe opynyoun of' certeyn clerkis  
 witnesse on him þat' eny clerk is  
 That' in scole is gret' altercacioun  
 In þis matier and gret' desputesoun 4428  
 And hath ben of' an hundred þousend men  
 But' 3it' I can not' . bult' it to þe bren  
 As can þe holy doctor augustyn  
 Or boece . or þe bisshop Bradwardyn 4432  
 Wheþer þat' goddis worpy forwetyng'  
 Streigneth me needely for to do a þing'  
 Needely clepe I simple necessite  
 Or elles . if' fre choys be graunted me 4436

To do þat same þing or to do it nouȝt  
 Though god forwot it er þat it was wrought  
 Or of his wityng streyneþ neuer a deel  
 But by necessite condicionel 4440  
 I wol not haue to do of such matiere  
 My tale is of a Cok as ȝe schal hiere  
 That took his counseil of his wyf with sorwe /  
 To walken in þe ȝerd vpon þe morwe 4444  
 That he had met þe dreame þat I tolde  
 wymmens counseiles ben fulofte colde  
 wommannes counseil brouȝt vs first to woo  
 And made adam fro paradys to go 4448  
 Ther as he was ful mery and wel at ease  
 But for I not to him it might displease  
 If I counseil of womman wolde blame  
 Pas ouer for I sayd it in my game [leaf 214] 4452  
 Red auctours wher þay trete of such matiere  
 And what þay sayn of wommen ȝe may heere  
 These ben þe cokkes wordes and not myne  
 I can / noon harme / of wommen diuine / 4456  
 Faire in þe sond to baþe hir merily  
 lith pertelot and alle hir sustres by  
 Agayn þe sonne and Chaunteclere so free  
 Sang merier þan þe meremayd in þe see 4460  
 For phisiologus seith sicurly  
 how þat þay syngen wel and merily  
 And so byfel þat as he cast his ye  
 Among þe wortes on a boterflye 4464  
 he was war of þis fox þat lay ful lowe  
 No þing ne list him þanne for to crowe  
 But cryde anon . cok . cok / . and vp he stert  
 As man þat was affrayed in his hert 4468  
 For naturelly a beest desireth flee  
 Fro his contrarie if / he may it see  
 þough he neuer er had sayn it with his ye  
 þis Chaunteclere whan he gan it aspye 4472

he wold han fled but þat þe fox anon  
 Said gentil sire / allas why wol 3e goon  
 Be 3e affrayd of me þat am 3oure frend  
 Certes I were worse þan any feend 4476  
 If I to 3ow wold harm or vilonye  
 I am nouȝt come 3our counsail to espye  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 4480  
 But trewely 3e haue als mery a steuen  
 As eny aungel hath þat is in heuen  
 Ther wiþ 3e han in musik' more felynge  
 Than had Boece or eny þat can synge 4484  
 My lord 3our fader god his soule blesse /  
 And 3oure moder of her gentillesse  
 han in myn hous I-been to my gret ease  
 And Certes sire ful fayn wold I 3ow please 4488  
 But for men speke of syngyng' I wol say  
 So mot' I brouke wel myn yen tway  
 Saue 3e I herde neuer man so synge  
 As dede 3our fadir in þe morwenynge [leaf 241, back] 4492  
 Certes it was of hert' al þat he song'  
 And for to make his vois þe more strong'  
 he wold so peynen him þat wiþ boþe his yen  
 he moste wynke so lowde he wolde crien 4496  
 And stonden on his typtoon þer wiþ al  
 And streche forth his necke long' and smal  
 And eek/ he was of such discressioun  
 That þer nas no man in no regioun 4500  
 That him in song' or wisdom mighte passe  
 I haue wel rad in Daun Burnel thasse  
 Among' his verses how þer was a Cok'  
 For a prestes sone 3af' him a knok' 4504  
 vpon his leg' whil he was 3ong' and nyce  
 He made him for to lese his benefice  
 But certeyn þer is no comparisoun  
 Bitwix þe wisdom and discressioun 4508

Of þoure fader and of his subtilte  
 Now syngeþ sire for seinte charite  
 let se can ȝe ȝour fader countrefete  
 This Chanteclere his wynges gan to bete 4512  
 As man that couþe his tresoun nought espye  
 So was he rauyssht wip his flaterie  
 Allas lordynges many a fals flatour  
 Is in ȝour hous and many a losengour 4516  
 That pleasen ȝow wel more by my faith  
 Than he þat soþfastnesse vnto ȝow saith  
 Rediþ Ecclesiast of flaterie  
 Beþ war ȝe lordes of her treccherie / 4520  
 This Chaunteclere stood heihe vpon his toos  
 Strecching his necke and his yhen cloos  
 And gan to crowe lowde for þe noones/  
 And daun Russel þe fox stert vp at oones 4524  
 And by þe garget hente Chaunteclere  
 And on his bak toward þe woode him bere  
 For ȝit was þere / no man þat him sewed  
 O desteny þat maist not ben eschiewed 4528  
 Allas þat Chaunteclere fleigh fro þe bemis  
 Allas his wif roughete nought of dremis [leaf 245]  
 And on a friday fel al þis meschaunce  
 O venus þat art god of pleasaunce 4532  
 Syn þat þy seruant was þis Chaunteclere  
 And in þy seruice did al his powere  
 More for delit þan þe world to multiplie  
 why woldest þou suffre him on þy day to dye 4536  
 O gaufred dere mayster souerayn  
 That whan þe worþy king Richard was slayn  
 with schot compleynedist/ his deþ so sore  
 why ne had I nouȝt þy sentence and þy lore 4540  
 þe friday for to chiden as dede ȝe  
 For on a fryday soþly slayn was he  
 Than wold I schewe how þat I couþe pleyne /  
 For Chauntecleres drede and for his peyne 4544

Certis such cry ne lamentacioun  
 was neuer of ladies maad whan Ilioun  
 was wonne and pirrus with his strit' swerd  
 whan he hente kyng' priam by þe berd 4548  
 And slough him as saith vs Eneydos  
 As maden alle þe hennes in þe clos  
 whan þay had sayn of Chauntecler þe sight'  
 Nought' soueraignly . dam pertelote schright' 4552  
 Ful lowder þan did hasdrubaldes wyf'  
 whan þat' hir housebond had lost/ his lyf'  
 And þat' þe Romayns had I-brent' Cartage  
 Sche was so ful of torment' and of rage / 4556  
 That' wilfully vnto þe fuyr sche stert  
 And brend hir seluen with a stedfast' hert  
 O woful hennes right' so cride 3e  
 As whan þat' Nero brente þe cite 4560  
 Of Rome criden þe senatoures wyues  
 For þat' her housbondes losten alle here lyues  
 wipouten gult þis nero hath hem slayn  
 Now wol I torne to my matier agayn 4564  
 ¶ The sely wydow and hir doughtres tuo  
 herden þese hennys crie and maken wo  
 And out' at dores starte þay anoon  
 And sayden þe fox toward þe woode is goon [U 215, 22] 4568  
 And bar vpon his bak' þe cok' away  
 And criden out' harrow and wayleway  
 ha . ha . þe fox and after him þay ran  
 And eek' with staues many anoper man 4572  
 Ran Colle our dogge and talbot' and Garlond  
 And Malkyn wip a distaf' in hir hond  
 Ran cow and calf' and þe verray hoggoes  
 So were þey fered for berkyng' of dogges 4576  
 And schowtyng' of þe men and wymmen eke  
 þay ronne þat' þay þought' her herte breke  
 Thay 3elleden as feeldes doon in helle  
 The dokes criden as men wold hem quelle 4580

The gees for fere flowen ouer þe trees  
 Out of þe hyues cam þe swarm of bees  
 So hidous was þe noyse a benedicite  
 Certes þough lakke straw and his meyne 4584  
 Ne maden schoutes neuer half so schrille  
 whan þat þay wolden eny flemynge kille /  
 As þilke day was maad vpon þe fox  
 Of bras þay brough hornes and of box 4588  
 Of horn of boon in which þay blew and powped  
 And þer with al thay schryked and þay howped  
 It semed as þat heuen schulde falle  
 Now goode men I pray herknep alle / 4592  
 lo how fortune torneþ sodeinly  
 The hope and pride eek of her enuy  
 This Cok þat lay vpon þis foxes bak  
 In al his drede vnto the fox he spak 4596  
 And saide sire if þat I were as ȝe  
 ȝet schuld I sayn as wis god helpe me  
 Turneþ aȝein ȝe proude cherles alle  
 A verray pestilens vpon ȝow falle / 4600  
 Now am I come vnto þis woodes syde /  
 Maugre ȝoure heed þe Cok/ schal heer abyde  
 I wol him ete in faith and þat anon  
 The Fox answerd in faith it schal be doon 4604  
 And whil he spak þat word al sodeinly  
 This Cok brak from his mouth delyuerly [leaf 246r]  
 And heigh vpon a tree he fleigh anon  
 And whan þe fox seigh þat he was I-goon 4608  
 Allas quod he o. Chaunteclere allas  
 I haue to ȝow quod he y-don trespas  
 In as moche as I makid ȝow aferd  
 whan I ȝow hent and brouȝt out of þe ȝerd 4612  
 But sire I dede it in no wicked entent  
 Com down and I schal telle ȝow what I ment  
 I schal say soþ to ȝow god help me so  
 Nay þan quod he I schrew vs boþe tuo 4616



## GROUP B. § 14. NUN'S-PRIEST'S TALE. Harleian 7334. 577

And first I schrew my self boþe blood and boones  
 If þou bigile me . any ofter þan oones  
 Thou schalt no more þurgh þy flaterye  
 Do me to synge and wyne with myn ye 4620  
 For he þat wykith whan he scholde se  
 Al wilfully god let him neuer the  
 Nay quod þe Fox but god ȝiue him meschaunce /  
 þat is so vndiscret of gouernaunce / 4624  
 þat iangleth whan he scholde holde his pees  
 Lo such it is for to be recheles  
 And necligent and trust on flaterie /  
 But ȝe þat holde / þis tale a folye / 4628  
 As of a Fox . or of a cok' or of an hen  
 Takith þe moralite goode men  
 For seint poul saith þat al þat writen is  
 To oure doctrine it is I-write I-wys 4632  
 Takith þe fruyt and let þe chaf be stille  
 Now goode god . if þat it be þy wille  
 As saith my lor so make vs alle good men  
 And bring vs alle . to his blisse ameN 4636  
 ¶ Here endeth þe tale of Chaunteclere and pertelote

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe maunciples tale

**W**ot 3e not wher þer stont a litel toun  
which þat cleped is Bob vp and down  
vnder þe Ble in Caunterbury way

Ther gan our hoste for to iape and play 4

And sayde sires what dun is in þe myre

Is þer no man for prayer ne for hyre [leaf 246, back]

Thal wol awake our felawes al by-hynde

A theef mighte ful lightly robbe and bynde 8

Se how he nappith se for goddes boones

That he wol falle fro his hors at ones

Is þat a Cook of londoun wip meschaunce /

Do him come forth he knoweth his penaunce / 12

For he schal telle a tale by my fay

Al þough it be nouȝt worþ a botel hay

Awake þou Cook sit vp god ȝif þe sorwe

what eyleþ þe to slepe by þe morwe / 16

Hast þou had fleen al night or artow dronke

Or hastow with some quen al night I-swonke

So þat þou maist not holden vp þyn heed

This cook þat was pale and no þing reed 20

Sayd to our host so god my soule blesse /

As þer is falle on me such heuynesse

Not I nouȝt why þat me were leuer slepe /

Than þe beste galoun wyn in Chepe / 24

¶ wel quod þe maunciple if þat I may doon ease /  
 To þe sir Cook and to no wight displease /  
 which þat her rydeþ in þis compaignye  
 And our host wolde of his curteisie 28  
 I wol as now excuse þe of þy tale  
 For in good faith þi visage is ful pale  
 þyn eyen daswen eek. also me þinkith  
 And wel I woot þy breth ful foule stynkith 32  
 That schewep eek þou art nought wel disposid  
 Of me certeyn þou schalt nouȝt ben I-glosed  
 Se how he ganith. lo þis dronken wight  
 As þough he wolde swolwe vs anoon right 36  
 hold clos þy mouth by þy fader kynne  
 The deuel of helle sette his foot þer Inne  
 Thy cursed breth effecte wil vs alle  
 Fy stynkyng swyne foule mot þe falle 40  
 A. takip heed sires of þis lusty man  
 Now swete sir. wol ȝe ioust atte fan  
 Therto me þinkþ. ȝe beþ right wel I-schape  
 I trowe þa ȝe dronken han wyn ape [100/247] 44  
 And þat whan men playen with a straw  
 And with his speche þe cook wax angry & wraw  
 And on þe maunciple bygan he nodde fast  
 For lak of speche. and down þe hors him cast 48  
 wher as he lay til þat men him up took  
 This was a fair Chiuache of a cook  
 Allas þat he nad hold him by his ladil  
 And er þat he agayn were in his sadil 52  
 Ther was gret schowuyng bope to and fro  
 To lift him vp and moche care and wo  
 So vnwelde was þis sory pallid gost  
 And to þe maunciple þanne spak oure host 56  
 By cause drink hath dominacioun  
 Vpon þis man by my sauacioun  
 I trow he lewedly tel wol his tale  
 For were it wyn or old moysty ale 60

þat he hæp dronk'. he spekiþ in his nose /  
 And fnesith fast'. and eek' he hæp þe pose  
 he also to do more þan ynough  
 To kepe him and his Capil out' of þe slough 64  
 And if' he falle fro his capil eft' sone!  
 þan schal we alle haue ynough to doone  
 In lifyng' vp his heuy drunken cors  
 Tel on thy tale of him make I no fors 68  
 But' 3it' maunciple in faith þou art' to nyce  
 Thus openly reproeue him of his vice  
 Anoper day he wil par aduenture  
 Reclayme þe and bringe þe to lure 72  
 I mene he speke wol of smale þinges  
 As for to pynchyn at' þy rekenynges  
 That' were not' honest' if' it cam to pref'  
 Quod þe maunciple þat' were a gret' meschief' 76  
 So might' he lightly bringe me in þe snare  
 3it' had I leuer payen for þe mare  
 which he ryt' on. þan he schulde with me stryue  
 I wil not' wrath him al so mot' I priue 80  
 That' at' I spak' I sayd it' in my bourde  
 And wite 3e what' I haue heer in a gourde [leaf 247, back]  
 A draught' of' wyn. is of' a ripe grape /  
 And right' anoon 3e schal se a good iape 84  
 þis Cook' schal drinke þer-of' if' I may  
 vp peyn of' deth he wol nou3t' say me nay  
 And certainly to tellen as it was /  
 Of' þis vessel þe cook' dronk' fast' allas 88  
 what' needid it. he drank' ynough biforn  
 And whan he hadde pouped in his horn  
 To þe maunciple he took' þe gourd agayn  
 And of' þat' draught' þe cook' was wonder fayn 92  
 And þanked him in such wise as he couþe /  
 Than gan our host' to laughe wonder louth' /  
 And sayd I se wel it is necessarie  
 wher þat' we go good drynk' wip vs to carie 96

SIX-TEXT 579  
GROUP H. § 1. MANCIPLE'S HEAD-LINK. Harleian 7334. 581

For þat wol torne rancour and desese  
To accord and loue and many racour pese /  
O þou bacus I-blessid be þin name  
That so canst torne earnest in to game 100  
worschip and þonke . be to þy deite  
Of þat matier 3e get no more of me  
Tel on þi tale mauncipel I þe pray  
wel sir quod he . now herkyn what I say ¶ Narrat 104

[*No break in the MS.*]

in phebus dult' her in þis arþe a doun  
 As olde bookea maken mencionn  
 He was þe mooste lusty bachiler  
 Of al þis world and eek' þe best' archer 108  
 He slough phiton þe serpent as he lay  
 Slepyng' agayn þe sonne vpon a day  
 And many another noble worþy dede  
 He with his bowe wrought' as men may rede / 112  
 Pleyen he couþe on euery mynstraleye  
 And syngen þat' it was a melodye  
 To heren of his cleere vois þe soun  
 Cartes þe kyng' of Thebes amphioun 116  
 That' with his singyng' wallid þat' citee  
 Couþe neuer synge half so wel as he /  
 Ther-to he was þe semlieste man  
 That is or was sithen þe world bigan (116/117) 120  
 what' nedip it his fortune to descriue  
 For in þis worlde is noon such on lyue  
 he was þer with fulfild of gentilesce  
 Of honour and of parfyt' worþinesse 124  
 This phebus þat' was flour of bachilerie  
 Als wel in fredom as in chivalrie  
 For to disport' in signe of victorie  
 Of phiton so as telleþ vs þe storie 128  
 was wont to bere in his hond a bowe  
 Now had þis phebus in his hous a crowe  
 which in a cage he fostred many a day  
 And taught' it' speken as men doon a iay 132

whit' was þis crowe as is a snow-whyte swan  
 And countrefete the speche of euery man  
 he coupe whan he schulde telle a tale  
 Ther is wipinne þis world no nightingale 136  
 Ne coupe by an hundred þousend del  
 Singe so wonder merily and wel  
 Now had þis phebus in his hous a wyf  
 which þat he loued. more þan his lif 140  
 And night' and day. did euermor diligence /  
 hir for to please. and doon hir reuerence  
 Sauþ' oonly if þe soþ þat I schal sayn  
 Ialous he was and wold haue kept hir fayn 144  
 For him were loth biaped for to be /  
 And so is euery wight' in such degre  
 But' al for nought' for it auaieth nouȝt  
 A good wyf þat is clene of werk' and thought 148  
 Schuld not' be kept' in noon awayt certayn  
 And trewely þe labour is in vayn  
 To kepe a schrewe for it wil nought' be  
 This hold I for a verray nycete 152  
 To spille labour for to kepe wyues  
 Thus olde clerkes writen in her lyues  
 But' now to purpos as I first' bigan  
 This worþi phebus dop al þat he can 156  
 To pleasen hir wenyng' by such plesaunce /  
 And for his manhod and his gouernaunce [leaf 248, back]  
 That' no man schuld han put' him fro hir grace  
 But' god it' woot'. þer may no man embrace 160  
 As to destroy a þing'. þe which nature  
 hap naturelly. set' in a creature  
 Tak' any brid and put him in a cage  
 And do al þin entent and þy corrage 164  
 To foster it tenderly wip mete and drynk'  
 And wip alle þe deyntees þou canst' þink'  
 And keep it' al so kyndly as þou may  
 Al þough his cage of gold be neuer so gay 168

3it hap þis brid by twenty þousand fold  
 Leuer to be . in forest' wyd and cold  
 Gon ete wormes and such wrecchidnes  
 For euer þis brid wil doon his busynes 172  
 To scape out' of his cage whan he may  
 his liberte þe brid desireth ay  
 let' take a cat and foster him wel wip mylk/  
 And tender fleisch and mak' his bed of silk/ 176  
 And let' him see a mous go by þe wal  
 Anoon he wayueth mylk' and fleisch and al  
 And euery deynte which is in þat' hous  
 Such appetit hap he to ete þe mous 180  
 lo heer hap lust' his dominacioun  
 And appetit . flemeth discr[e]scioun  
 Also a sche wolf' hap a vilayns kynde /  
 The lewigest' . wolf' þat' sche may fynde 184  
 Or lest' of reputacioun him wol sche take  
 In tyme whan hir lust/ to haue a make/  
 Alle þis ensamples . tel I by þis men  
 That' ben vntrewe and no þing' by wommen 188  
 For men han euer a licorous appetit  
 On lower þing' to parforme her delit  
 Than on her wyues ben þay neuer so faire  
 Ne neuer so trewe ne so debonaire 192  
 Fleissch is so newfangil with meschaunce  
 That' we can in no þinge haue plesaunce  
 That' sounep in to vertu eny while  
 This phebus which þat' þought vpon no gile [leaf 210] 196  
 Deceyued was for al his iolite  
 For vnder him anoper hadde sche/  
 A man of litil reputacioun  
 Nought' worþ to phebus in comparisoun 200  
 Mor harm it is it' happeth ofte so  
 Of which þer comeþ boþe harm and woo  
 And so bifel whan phebus was absent'  
 His wif' anoon hath for hir lemman sent 204



hir lemman certes. þis is a knauisch speche  
 Forziueþ it me and þat I 3ow bisēche  
 The wise plato saith as 3e may rede  
 þe word mot' neede accorde wiþ þe dede 208  
 If men schal telle properly a þing'  
 The word mot' corde wiþ þe þing' werkyng'  
 I am a boystous [man] right thus say I  
 There is no difference trewely 212  
 Bytwix a wyf þat is of heigh degre /  
 If of hir body dishonest' sche be  
 And a pore wenche oþer þen þis  
 If so be þay werke boþe amys 216  
 But the gentil in estat' aboue  
 Sche schal be cleped his lady as in loue  
 And for þat oþer is a pore womman  
 Sche schal be cleped his wenche and his lemman 220  
 And god it wot my goode lieue broþer  
 Men layn þat oon as lowe as þat oþer  
 Right' so betwixe atticles tirant  
 And an outlawe or a þef' erraunt 224  
 The same I say þer is no difference  
 To alisaunder told was þis sentence  
 þat for þe tiraunt is of gretter might  
 Bi force of meyne for to sle doun right 228  
 And brenne hous and home and make al playn  
 Lo þerfor is he cleped a Captayn  
 And for an outlawe hap so smal meyne  
 And may not' doon so gret an harm as he 232  
 Ne bringe a contre to so gret meschief' /  
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a þeef' [leaf 249, back]  
 But for I am a man not' texted wel  
 I wil not' telle of textes neuer a del 236  
 I wol go to my tale as I bigan  
 whan phebus wyf had sent' for hir lemman  
 Anon þay wrou3ten al her wil volage  
 This white crow / þat heng' alway in cage 240

Bihild her werk' and sayde neuer a word  
 And whan þat' hom was come phebus þe lord  
 This Crowe song'. Cuckow . Cockow . Cuckow  
 what' bird quod phebus what' song' syngistow 244  
 Ne were þou wont' so merily to synge  
 That' to myn hert' it was a reioysynge  
 To here þi vois . allas what' song' is þis  
 By god quod he I synge not' amys 248  
 Phebus quod he for al þy worþynes  
 For al þy beaute and þy gentiles  
 For alle þy songes and þy menstralcie /  
 For al þy waytyng' blered is þin ye / 252  
 with oon of litel reputacioun  
 Nought' worth to þe as in comparisoun  
 The mountauns of a gnat' so mot' I þrue  
 For on þy bed þy wif' I saugh him swyue 256  
 what' wol ȝe more þe crowe anon him tolde /  
 By sadde toknes and by wordes bolde  
 how þat' his wyf' had doon hir leccherie  
 him to gret' schame and to gret vilonye 260  
 And told him oft/ he saugh it wip his yen  
 This phebus gan awayward for to wryen  
 him þought' his sorwful herte brast' on tuo  
 his bowe he bent' and sett' þer-In a flo 264  
 And in his ire he hap' his wif' I-slayn  
 þis is þeffect þer is no more to sayn  
 For sorw of which he brak' his menstralcyne  
 Boþe harp . giterne . and sauterie 268  
 And eek' he brak' his arwes and his bowe  
 And after þat' þus spak' he to þe crowe  
 Traytour quod he wip tunge of scorpioun  
 Thow hast' me brought' to my confusioun [leaf 200] 272  
 Allas þat' I was born why nere I deed  
 O dere wyf' O gemme of lustyhed  
 That' were to me so sad and eek' so trewe  
 Now list þou deed with face pale of hewe 276

Ful gulteles þat dorst I swere I-wis  
 O racle hond to do so foule amys  
 O trouble wit O Ire recheles  
 That vnaused smytest gulteles 280  
 O wantrust ful of fals suspeccioun  
 wher was þy wit and þy discrecioun  
 O euery man be war of racle nesse  
 Ne trowe no þing wiþoute gret witnesse 284  
 Smyt nouȝt to soone. er þat þou wite why /  
 And be auysed wel and sobrelly  
 Er ȝe doon eny execucioun  
 Vpon ȝour Ire for suspeccioun 288  
 Allas a þousand folk hap racle Ire  
 Fordoon. or dun hath brouȝt hem in þe myre  
 Allas for sorw / I wil my seluen sle  
 And to þe crowe o false þeef sayd he 292  
 I wyl þe quyt anoon þy false tale /  
 Thow songe whilom as any nightyngale /  
 Now schaltow false þef þy song forgoon  
 And eek þy white fetheres euerich oon 296  
 Ne neuer in al þy lyf ne schaltow speke  
 Thus schal men on a fals þeef ben a-wreke  
 Thou and þin o[f]spring euer schuln be blake  
 Ne neuer sweete noyse schul ȝe make 300  
 But euer crye agayn tempest and rayn  
 In tokenyng þat þurgh þe my wyf was slayn  
 And to þe crowe he stert and þat anoon  
 And puld his white fetheres euerychoon 304  
 And made him blak and raft him al his song  
 And eek his speche and out at dore him along  
 vnto þe deuel which I him bytake  
 And for þis cause ben alle crows blake 308  
 Lordyngs by þis ensample I ȝow pray  
 Beth war and takeþ kepe what ȝe say / [leaf 250, back]  
 Ne tellith neuer man in al ȝoure lif  
 how þat anoper man hap dight his wyf 312

he wol 3ou hatin mortelly certeyn  
 Daun Salamon as wise clerkes seyn  
 Techeþ a man to kepe his tonge wel  
 But as I sayd. I am nought tixted wel 316  
 But/ napeles þus taughte me my dame  
 My sone thenk on þe crowe in goddes name  
 My son keep wel þy tonge and kep þy frend  
 A wicked tonge. is worse þan a feend 320  
 My sone fro a feend men may hem blesse  
 My sone god of his endeles goodnesse  
 wallid a tonge wip teeþ and lippes eek  
 For man schal him auyse what he speek 324  
 My sone ful ofte for to mochil speche /  
 hap many a man be spilt as clerkes teche  
 But for a litil speche auisily  
 Is no man schent to speke generally 328  
 My sone þy tonge scholdest þou restreigne  
 At alle tyme but whan 'þou dost þy peyne /  
 To speke of god in honour and prayere  
 The firste vertu sone if þou wilt lere 332  
 Is to restreigne and kepe wel þy tonge  
 Thus lerne clerkes whan þat þay ben 3onge  
 My sone of mochil speking euel aused  
 Ther lasse speking had ynough suffised 336  
 Comeþ mochil harm þus was me told and taught  
 In mochel speche synne wantip nought  
 wost wher of a racle tonge serueþ  
 Right a sword for-kutteþ and kerueþ 340  
 An arm a tuo my dere sone right so  
 A tonge cutteth frendschip al a tuo  
 A iangler is to god abhominable  
 Red Salamon so wys and honorable 344  
 Red Daud in his psalmes reed Senek  
 My sone spek not. but wip þy heed þu bek  
 Dissimul as þou were deed if þat þou heere  
 A iangler speke of perilous mateere [leaf 251] 348

The flemyng<sup>t</sup> saip and lere it if þe lest /  
 That litil iangling causeþ mochil rest  
 My sone if þou no wikked word hast sayd  
 The thar not drede for to be bywrayd 352  
 But he þat hap mys sayd I dar wel sayn  
 he may by no way clepe his word agayn  
 Thing þat is sayd . is sayd . and forþ it goþ  
 Though him repent or be him neuer so loþ 356  
 He is his þral to whom þat/ he hap sayd  
 A tale of which he is now yuel a payd  
 My sone be war and be noon auctour newe /  
 Of tydyngs wheþer þay ben fals or trewe / 360  
 wher-so þou comest amonges heih or lowe /  
 kep wel þy tonge / and thenk vpon þe crowe  
 ¶ Here endith þe tale of þe crowe

[*No break in the MS.*]

## GROUP I. FRAGMENT X.

## § 1. THE BLANK-PARSON LINK.

¶ And here begynneth the prolōge of þe Persouns tale

**B**y þat þe maunciple had had his tale endid  
 The sonne fro þe south line is descendid  
 So lowe þat it nas nouȝt to my sight  
 Degrees [nyne and twenty as in hight<sup>1</sup>] [*In a later hand.*] 4  
 Ten on þe Clokke it was as I gesse /  
 For enleuen foote or litil morē or lesse /  
 My schadow was at þilk tyme of þe ȝere  
 Of which feet as my lengþe parted were / 8  
 In [sixe<sup>1</sup>] feet equal of proporcioun  
 Ther-with þe mones exaltacioun  
 In mena libra alway gan ascende  
 As we were entryng at a townes ende 12  
 For which our host as he was wont to gye  
 As in þis caas our ioly compaignye  
 Sayd in þis wise lordings euerich oon  
 Now lakkeþ vs no moo tales þan oon 16  
 Fulfilled is my sentens and my decre  
 I trowe þat we han herd of ech degre  
 Almost fulfilled is myn ordynaunce  
 I pray to god so ȝeue him right good chaunce 20  
 That tellith to vs his tale lustily  
 Sire prest quod he artow a vicory [*leaf 251, back*]  
 Or artow a persoun say soþ by þy fay  
 Be what þou be breke nouȝt oure play 24

For euery man saue þou hath told his tale  
 vnboole and schew vs what is in þy male  
 For trewely me þinkeþ by þy chier  
 þou scholdist wel knyht vp a gret matier 28  
 Tel vs a tale anoon for cokkes boones  
 This persoun answerde al at oones /  
 Thow getist fable noon I-told for me  
 For poul þat writes vnto thimothe 32  
 Repreueþ hem þat weyueþ sothfastnesse  
 And tellen fables and such wrecchednesse /  
 why schuld I sowen draf out of my fest/  
 whan I may sowe whete if þat me lest/ 36  
 For which I say if þat 3ow lust to hie  
 Moralite and vertuous matiere  
 And þanne þat 3e wil 3iue me audience  
 I wol ful fayn at cristis reuerence 40  
 Do 3ow plesaunce leful as I can  
 But trusteþ wel I am a suthern man  
 I can not geste . rum raf . ruf by letter  
 Ne god wot rym hold I but litel better 44  
 And þerfor if 3ow lust I wol not glose  
 I wol 3ow telle a mery tale in prose /  
 To knyht vp al this fest and make an ende  
 And Ihū for his grace wit me sende 48  
 To schewe 3ow þe way in þis viage  
 Of þilke parfyt glorious pilgrimage  
 That hatte Ierusalem celestial  
 And if 3e vouche sauf anoon I schal 52  
 Bygynne my tale for which I 3ow pray  
 Telle 3our avis I can no better say  
 But napeles þis meditacioun  
 I put it ay vnder correctioun 56  
 Of clerkes for I am not textuel  
 I take but þe sentens trustip wel  
 Therfor I make protestacioun  
 That I wol stonde to correccioun [leaf 252] 60

591 SIX-TEXT

592 GROUP I. § 1. BLANK-PARSON LINK. **Harleian 7334.**

Vpon þis word we han assented soone  
For as it semed it was for to done  
To enden in som vertuous sentence  
And for to ȝeue him space and audience 64  
And bad oure host<sup>t</sup> he schulde to him say  
That<sup>t</sup> alle we to telle his tale him pray  
Our host<sup>t</sup> hadde þe wordes for vs alle  
Sir prest<sup>t</sup> quod he now faire ȝow bifalle 68  
Say what<sup>t</sup> ȝow lust<sup>t</sup> and we wil gladly hie  
And wiþ þat<sup>t</sup> word he said in þis manere  
Telleþ quod he ȝour meditacioun  
But<sup>t</sup> hasteth ȝow þe sonne wol a doun 72  
Beþ fructuous and þat / in litil space  
And to do wel! God sende ȝow grace /

[*No break in the MS.*]



(*The Page-numbers are those of the Six-Text.*)

## THE PARSON'S TALE.

### A TREATISE ON PENITENCE, IN 3 PARTS :

- Part I. On Penitence, and its 1st requisite Contrition (A) (p. 593—612).  
 Part II. On its 2nd requisite, Confession (B) (p. 612—679).  
 Part III. On its 3rd requisite, Satisfaction (C) (p. 679—684), with  
 the Writer's Leave-taking and Retractations (p. 684-85).

### PART I. (p. 593—612).

#### ON PENITENCE, AND ITS 1ST REQUISITE, CONTRITION.

Proem on Jeremiah vi. 16. The Tale is to be on *Penitence* as a full noble way to lead folk to Christ, and is to treat of

- i. 'what is Penitence' (p. 594).
  - ii. 'whennes it is cleped Penitence'. [*not in the Tale.*]
  - iii. 'in how manye maneres been the acciouns or werkynge of Penitence' (p. 594-5).
  - iv. 'how many speces ther been of Penitence' (p. 595).
  - v. 'whiche thynges apertenen and bihouen to Penitence' (p. 595—682: nearly all Parts I and III, and all Part II).
  - vi. 'whiche thynges destourben Penitence' (at end of Part III, p. 682) (p. 593).
  - i. Penitence defined, by *a.* St Ambrose; *b.* 'som doctour'; *c.* the writer. Its requisites: 1. bewailing of sins; 2. purpose to have shrift, to do satisfaction, never to sin again, to continue in good works (p. 594).
  - [ii. *not given.*]
  - iii. The 3 actions of Penitence: 1. Baptism after sin; 2. not to do deadly sin after baptism; 3. not thus to do venial sin (p. 594-95).
  - iv. The 3 speces or kinds of Penitence: 1. Solemn (to be put out of church, or do open penance); 2. Common (to go naked on pilgrimage); 3. Private (p. 595).
  - v. The 3 necessities or requisites for Penitence (p. 596—682):
    - A. Contrition of heart (p. 596—612).
    - B. Confession of mouth (Part II, p. 612—679).
    - C. Satisfaction (Part III, p. 679—682).
- Penitence avails against 3 things, by which we wrath Christ (p. 595).
- A. Contrition is the root of Penitence, whose stem bears branches and leaves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaction.  
 Contrition also bears a seed of grace, whose heat draws men to God. (Simile of the child and his nurse's milk.)  
 Penance is the tree of life (p. 596).
- Four Points to be known about Contrition:
1. What it is; 2. the causes that move a man to it; 3. how to be contrite; 4. what it avails the soul (p. 597).
  2. The 6 Causes that should move a man to Contrition:
    - a.* Remembrance of Sins (p. 597-8).
    - b.* Whoso does sin is the Thrall of Sin (p. 598-99).
    - c.* Dread of the Day of Doom and the Pains of Hell (p. 599—604).  
 These described: the Doom (p. 599-600); Job's 'lond of myse and of derknesse' (p. 600-1); the 3 shames in hell against (1) 'Honours, (2) delices, and (3) riches' (p. 611); poverty in 4 things: no treasure, food, clothing, or friends (p. 602); and no delights of the 5 senses. The pain shall be eternal (p. 603). Hell is orderless (p. 603-4). The 7 causes why the damnd have lost all hope (p. 604).
    - d.* Remembrance of the good works we've left undone, and the loss of the good works done while we were in sin (p. 604-6).  
 Deadly sin wipes out all good works formerly done (p. 605); and no good works can be done in deadly sin (p. 605-6).  
 The new French song, *J'ai tout perdu mon temps* (also quoted in Chaucer's late poem of *Fortune*).

- e. Remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins (p. 606). In man's sin, every ordinance is turnd up-so-down (p. 607). For this disorder Christ sufferd (p. 608).
- f. The hope of 3 things: 1. Forgiveness of Sins, 2. the Gift of Grace to do well, 3. the Glory of Heaven (p. 609).
- 3. How to be contrite. Contrition must be universal and total: for sins of thought, for desires against God's law, for wicked words as well as wicked deeds (p. 610). Contrition must be angwishous and continual (p. 609-11).
- 4. How Contrition helps the soul. It sometimes delivers a man from sin; destroys the prison of hell; cleanses the soul; changes the son of Wrath to the son of Grace (p. 611-12).

## PART II (*no. v. continued*).

### B. CONFESSION (THE 2ND REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 612—679).

- B. Confession. § 1. (l. 317) 'what is confession' (p. 612).
- § 2. 'wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon' (p. 672-9).
- § 3. 'whiche thynges been couenable to verrey Confession' (p. 674-79).

#### CONFESSION, § 1.

- 1. 'Confession is verrey shewynge of synnes to the preest' (l. 318) (p. 612). We must understand too
  - a. (l. 321) 'whennes that synnes spryngen' (p. 612—15).
  - b. 'how they encreessen' (p. 615-16; 672-74).
  - c. 'whiche they been' (p. 616—672).
- 1.a. Sin sprang from the fall of Adam (p. 612). The legend of Adam and Eve told (p. 613). From Adam we took Original Sin, and were born sons of eternal damnation; but Baptism rescues us; though we keep liability to temptation, or Concupiscence (p. 613-14).  
*Concupiscence*, or the nourishing and occasion of sin. St Paul and St Jerome's temptations (p. 614-15).
- 1.b. How Sin grows in a man. 1. by Concupiscence; 2. Subjection to the Devil; 3. Hesitation; 4. Doing, the Sin becoming Actual (p. 615-16).
- 1.c. Sin is *a.* venial, *β.* deadly (or mortal).
  - a. 1. Venial Sin defined. It skips into Deadly Sin. (Simile of the drops of water into a vessel's hold drowning the ship;) (p. 616).
  - β. 1. Deadly Sin defined (p. 617).
  - a. 2. Of divers small venial sins, hardly thought sins (p. 617-18); eating, drinking, talking, too much; using your wife too much; not visiting the sick (p. 617); talking vanities at church, &c. (p. 618). Cure of venial sins by love to Christ, prayer, confession, good works, receiving the Sacrament, holy-water, &c. (p. 618).
- 1.c. β. 2. *The Seven Deadly Sins.* The Chieftains, head and spring, of all other Sins (p. 619).
  - i. Pride (p. 619-26), and its Remedy (p. 626-8).
  - ii. Envy (p. 628-30), and its Remedy (p. 630-1).
  - iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its Remedy (p. 642-5).
  - iv. Accidie or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), and its Remedy (p. 650-1).
  - v. Avarice or Covetousness (p. 651-7), and its Remedy (p. 657-8).
  - vi. Gluttony (p. 658-9), and its Remedy (p. 660).
  - vii. Lechery (p. 660-8), and its Remedy (p. 668-72).
- i. PRIDE (p. 619—626). Its 16 (and more) Twigs. 1. Disobedience, 2. Boasting, 3. Hypocrisy, 4. Despite, 5. Arrogance (p. 619), 6. Impudence, 7. Swelling of Heart (rejoicing in harm done), 8. Insolence, 9. Elation, 10. Impatience, 11. Contumacy, 12.

Presumption, 13. Irreverence, 14. Pertinacity, 15. Vain-glory, 16. Jangling (chattering).

A private kind of pride (the Host's Wife's and Wife of Bath's<sup>1</sup>), wanting to go to offering first, &c. (p. 620).

Two kinds of Pride, *a.* 'within man's heart', *b.* without; *b.* being the sign of *a.*, 'as the gaye leefsel atte Taverne is sign of the wyn that is in the Celer'<sup>2</sup> (p. 620-21), *b.* outside pride.

*a.* in dear clothing, 1. superfluity of it: its cost, furring, chisel-holes, dragging in the dung, waste of material (p. 621), unfitness for giving to the poor: 2. scantness of it: showing men's privy members, and buttocks (like a she-ape's rump), and the former as half-flayd, in parti-colourd hose<sup>3</sup>. The 'outrageous array of Women' (p. 623).

*β.* in horses (p. 623), and vicious grooms to tend 'em; plate-harness, &c.

*γ.* in household: keeping too many retainers or servants, who oppress the poor (p. 624).

*δ.* in table: not asking the poor to feasts; having burning and ornamented dishes<sup>4</sup>; too costly cups, &c., and too choice minstrelsy (p. 624).

What Pride sins are deadly, and what venial (p. 624).

The Sources of Pride (p. 624): goods of Nature, Fortune, Grace (p. 624). The Folly of Pride in any of these goods of Nature: 'we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and . . . of o nature'<sup>5</sup>.

The general signs of *Gentleness*. (The flies calld 'bees', and their stingless king) (p. 625); 3 gifts of Grace; 3 of Fortune. The brittleness of popular praise<sup>6</sup> (p. 626).

#### *The Remedy against Pride.*

Humility or Meekness, and its 3 kinds: in 1. heart, 2. mouth, 3. works. 4 kinds of each of these (p. 626-27).

ii. ENVY (p. 627-30): defined by the Philosopher and St Augustine. It springs from Malice (p. 627).

Malice; 2 kinds of: 1. hardness of heart, or recklessness; 2. opposing truth (p. 627).

The 2 kinds of Envy (p. 628): 1. sorrow at other men's prosperity; 2. joy at other men's harm: whence comes

Backbiting; 5 kinds (p. 628): 1. praise with a *but* at the end; 2. turning well-meant things upside down to ill ones; 3. lessening a neighbour's goodness; 4. putting one man above another; 5. glad listening to scandal (p. 628).

Grudging or murmuring (p. 628): 1. against God (p. 629); 2. Murmuring from avarice, 3. from pride, 4. from envy; 5. among Servants, who say 'the Devil's *Paternoster*'; 6. Murmuring from ire or hate: thence, *a.* Bitterness of Heart, *b.* Discord, *c.* Scorning; *d.* Accusing (p. 629); *e.* Malignity (p. 630).

#### *The Remedy against Envy* (p. 630-31).

Love of God and one's neighbour. How a man shall love his neighbour. How an enemy is included in the name 'neighbour' (p. 630). 3 Remedies of Love, against 3 deeds of Hate (p. 631). Love is the medicine that casts out the venom of Envy from man's heart (p. 631).

iii. IRE or ANGER (p. 631-42), and its 2 kinds: *a.* good Ire or Wrath (p. 632); *b.* wicked Ire, and its 2 kinds: sudden ire, and ire of malice aforethought (p. 632-33).

Three Shrews that forge in the Devil's furnace: Pride, Envy, and Contumely (p. 633).

<sup>1</sup> Melibe-Monk Link, B. § 11; and General Prologue, A.

<sup>2</sup> Chaucer's father no doubt had a sign outside his wine-shop or tavern in Thames Street, London.

<sup>3</sup> The outspoken and somewhat coarse abuse of the new fashions in dress is a great change from Chaucer's admirable Third-Period chaff of the moral short-comings of the monks and friars, &c., in the Prologue and middle Tales. If this is not change of man, it's change of mood.

<sup>4</sup> Chaucer must have seen plenty of these when he was page, valet, and squire.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Chaucer's *Gentleness*, &c. <sup>6</sup> Compare Clerk's Tale, Part VI, st. 135.

Wrath takes away a man's wit and spiritual life (p. 634).

Fruits of Wrath: 1. Hate. 2. War and wrong. 3. Manslaughter, *a.* spiritual; *b.* bodily (p. 634).

*a.* The 3 kinds of spiritual Manslaughter (3, calld 6 in MSS. p. 634): 1. by Hate. 2. by Backbiting. 3. Giving wicked Counsel, by Fraud (p. 634).

*b.* bodily Manslaughter: slaying with your tongue, giving orders or counsel to slay a man (p. 634).

Manslaughter in deed: its 4 (that is, 7) kinds (p. 635): 1. by law: a Justice condemning a man to death; 2. justifiable homicide, in defence of one's own life; 3. by misadventure: shooting an arrow, &c.; 4. a woman overlying her child; 5. a man making a woman barren by drinks, &c., killing the foetus within her, shedding his seed in the wrong place; a woman killing the child in her womb; 6. a woman killing her child (after birth) for shame; 7. a man by lechery or blows killing a foetus.

(Sixteen) other sins coming from Ire or Anger.

1. blaming or despising God, as hazarders do (Cp. *Pardoner's Tale*) (p. 635); and those who treat of the Sacrament of the altar irreverently (p. 636).

2. Attry anger: making angry false excuses for sin.

3. Swearing, which dismembers Christ (p. 636).

*a.* Of lawful Swearing, before a Judge: its 3 conditions, and its motives; *b.* God's name and Christ's, not to be taken in vain (p. 637); *c.* swearing for gentility or manliness (p. 638); *d.* swearing suddenly; *e.* of Adjuration and Conjuraton by enchanters and necromancers; *f.* of Divination by Dreams, &c.; *g.* of Charms for Wounds and Maladies (p. 638).

4. Lying (p. 638), and its 6 kinds.

5. Flattering. How Flatterers are the Devil's Nurses, his Enchanters and Chaplains (p. 639).

6. Cursing that comes of irous heart: Malison.

7. Chiding and Reproach (p. 640); (specially a chiding wife<sup>1</sup>) (p. 640-41).

8. Scorning (p. 641).

9. Giving wicked Counsel (p. 641).

10. Sowing and making Discord (p. 642).

11. Double tongue (p. 642).

12. Betraying of Counsel (p. 642).

13. Menace.

14. Idle words.

15. Jangling (chattering) (p. 642).

16. Japing (joking) (p. 642-43).

*The Remedy against Anger* (p. 643-5). Debonairtee and Patience (p. 643). Four kinds of grievances, and their remedies: 1. wicked words, 2. loss of goods, 3. harm of body, 4. outrageous labour (p. 644).

Incentives to Patience. Story of the Philosopher and Child (p. 644-45). Obedience comes from Patience (p. 645).

iv. ACCIDIE, or SLOTH (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), is an enemy to the 3 states of man,—1. innocence (p. 645), 2. prayer (p. 646), 3. grace;—and to one's livelihood. Its 12 bad consequences (p. 646): 1. Sloth (and its remedy); 2. Dread to begin good works (p. 646); 3. Wanhope, or Despair (and its Remedy) (p. 647); 4. Somnolence (p. 648), and 5. Negligence, or 6. Recklessness, and the Remedy for each; 7. Idleness; 8. *Tarditas*, or tarrying before turning to God (p. 649); 9. Lachesse, or giving up a good work begun; 10. Coldness; 11. Undevotion; 12. Worldly sorrow (p. 649).

*The Remedy against Accidie* (p. 650-51): Fortitude or Strength, and its 5 kinds. 1. Magnanimity<sup>2</sup> or great Courage; 2. Faith or Hope; 3. Assurance; 4. Magnificence; 5. Constancy (p. 651).

<sup>1</sup> Does Chaucer here refer to his former wife?

<sup>2</sup> Miswritten 'Magnificence' in Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS.

- v. **AVARICE** (p. 651-57). The difference between Avarice and Covetousness (p. 651); and between an Idolater and an avaricious man (p. 652). Of Covetousness, and lords' extortion from their bondmen: "humble folk been Cristes freendes" (p. 652-53). The Duty of lords to their thralls or churls. Of those that pillage Holy Church (p. 653-54); lords who plunder the poor are like wolves (p. 654). Of Deceit between Merchant and Merchant (p. 654). Of honest bodily Merchandise (the surplus of one country may be sent to help another) (p. 654). Of spiritual Merchandise, or Simony, and its 2 kinds (p. 655),—thieves that steal Christ's souls get livings (p. 655-56);—Hasardry or Games of Chance (p. 656). Other outcomes of Avarice (p. 656): 1. Lying, 2. Theft (bodily and spiritual) (p. 656-57), 3. False Witness, 4. False Oaths (p. 657).

*The Remedy against Avarice* (p. 657): Mercy and Pity, and reasonable Liberality (p. 658). Of foolish largess (p. 658).

- vi. **GLUTTONY** (p. 658-59), and its 5 kinds (p. 659): 1. Drunkenness, or the burial of man's reason; 2. a troubled spirit; 3. bad way of eating; 4. distemperd bodily humours; 5. forgetfulness. Or, as St Gregory says, 1. eating too soon; 2. eating too delicate food; 3. taking too much; 4. troubling too much about cooking food; 5. eating greedily: these are the 5 fingers of the devil's hand (p. 659).

*The Remedy against Gluttony* (p. 660): Abstinence, and its fellows. Temperance, Shame, Content with plain food, Moderation, Sobriety, Sparing (p. 660).

- vii. **LECHERY** (p. 660). Its punishment in the Old Testament (p. 660). Adultery, and the desire of it (p. 661-62).

The 5 fingers of the Devil's other hand (p. 662): 1. foolish looking; 2. villainous touching; 3. foul words; 4. kissing (old dotards, and dry dogs at a rose-tree (p. 662); and how a man should love his wife); 5. the stinking deed of lechery (p. 663). Its kinds: 1. Fornication. Taking a maid's maidenhead, or 100th fruit (p. 663). 2. Adultery, defined. 3. Harms following from it: *a.* breaking of faith; *b.* theft (of the wife's body from her husband (Joseph and Potiphar's wife), and of her soul from Christ); *c.* breaking God's commandment, and defouling Christ (p. 664). Of Harlots and Bawds (p. 665). Adultery is set between Theft and Manslaughter. More kinds of Adultery: 1. by Men bound by Religious Vows, &c.; 2. those in Holy Orders (p. 665). Lecherous Priests are like a free Bull in a town, and they eat raw flesh of folk's wives and daughters (p. 666); 3. by man and wife copulating for pleasure only (p. 667); 4. copulation with kinsfolk, spiritual (or godchildren) or fleshly (blood relations). 5. the abominable unmentionable sin; 6. Pollution, of 3 kinds: 1. too rank humours; 2. weakness (p. 667); 3. evil thoughts (p. 668).

*The Remedy for Lechery* (p. 668): I. Chastity and Continence.

1. in Marriage. (The true effect of Marriage. One husband to have one wife (p. 668). How a man should behave to his wife (p. 669). How the wife should be subject to her husband (p. 669), and be moderate in behaviour, discreet in words, &c. (p. 669-70). The 3 causes for which man and wife may copulate (p. 670): *a.* begetting of children; *b.* to pay the mutual debt of their bodies; *c.* to avoid lechery (p. 670). The 4th cause, pleasure, is deadly sin (p. 670-71).)

2. In Widowhood; 3. Virginity (p. 671).

II. Special avoidance of causes of lechery: *a.* eating and drinking; long sleeping; *b.* the person who'd tempt you (p. 671-72). (I wish I could tell you the Ten Commandments; but it's too high doctrine (p. 672).) [End of *Confession*, § 1, *c.*]

Sin is in heart, mouth, deed, by the 5 Wits (p. 672).

- § 1. *b.* (see p. 615-16.) The 7 Circumstances that encrease or aggravate sins (p. 672). 1. the person who sins (male or female, &c.); 2. the kind of sin (fornication or homicide); 3. the place it was committed in (as in a church, by a priest) (p. 673); 4. for what motive; 5. the number of times it was committed; 6. by what temptation; 7. how it was committed; and all other circumstances (p. 674).

CONFESSION, § 2, § 3 (p. 674-79).

*Profitable Confession, and its 4 (= 3) Conditions* (p. 674):

1. sorrowful bitterness of heart (p. 674); its 5 signs: *a.* shamefastness (like the Publican's) (p. 675); *b.* humility; *c.* fulness of tears (p. 675); *d.* no hesitation (like the Magdalen) for shame; *e.* obedience to receive penance laid on you (p. 675).
2. speedy Confession (p. 676); its 4 Conditions: *f.* that it be well thought over; *g.* the greatness and number of sins must be understood; *h.* the sinner must be contrite, and *i.* avoid occasions of sins.
3. Shrift must be made to one man, not more (p. 676).

*True Shrift, and its 10 Conditions* (p. 677): 1. that it be of free will; 2. that it be lawful (both sinner and priest, Popish); 3. that it be not despairing of Christ's mercy; 4. that a man accuse himself only, and not another; 5. that it be not lying (accusing oneself of sins never committed) (p. 678); that it be by one's own mouth, and not by letter; 7. that the sin be not painted with fair words; 8. that the shrift be to a discreet priest; 9. that the shrift be not made for vain-glory, but for fear of Christ; 10. that the shrift be not made suddenly, for a joke (p. 678). You may be shriven more than once for the same sin; and should be houseld once a year (p. 679).

PART III (*no. v. continued, and no. vi.*).

SATISFACTION (THE 3RD REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE)  
(p. 679—684).

In *a.* Alms. *β.* bodily punishment.

*a. Alms and its three kinds* (p. 679): 1. Contrition of heart. 2. Pity for one's neighbour's faults. 3. Giving good counsel to other's souls and bodies (food, visits in prison, burial). These Alms should be done privily, if possible (p. 680).

*β. Bodily Punishment (Penance), of 4 kinds*: 1. Prayers (chiefly of the Paternoster, whose expounding I leave to Masters of Theology) (p. 680). 2. Watching, and its 3 kinds: forbearing, *a.* meat and drink, *b.* worldly jollity, and *c.* deadly sin (p. 681). 3. Fasting, and its 4 kinds: Liberality to poor folk; spiritual gladness of heart; not grudging at fasting; reasonable eating. 4. Virtuous teachings, or Discipline: *a.* by word, writing, or example; *b.* by wearing hairshirts, &c., next your skin, scourging yourself, taking evils and injuries patiently (p. 682). [End of no. v. in Part i; p. 593.]

vi. The 4 Things that disturb Penance [no. vi, or last §, of p. 593 at foot] (p. 682). 1. Dread, and its remedy. 2. Shame, and its remedy. 3. Hope: *a.* of long life, and *b.* consequent overconfidence in Christ's mercy (p. 683). 4. Wanhope, or Despair of Mercy; its 3 kinds: *x.* from great and long continued sin; *y.* from falls-back into sin; *z.* from not being able to persevere in goodness (p. 683).

The fruit of Penance (p. 683-4).

EPILOGUE.

The Author's Leave-taking, and Lament over, and Withdrawal of, his Sinful Books, &c. (p. 684-85).

*[There are no paragraph-breaks or line-numbers in the MS., but Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept in the print for convenience sake.]*

¶ Ier. 6°. State super vias & videte et interrogate de semitis antiquis que sit via bona et ambulate in ea et inuenietis ¶ refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.

[75]

**O**wre swete lord god of heuen þat no man wil perische but wol þat we comen alle to þe knowleche of him and to þe blisful lif þat is perdurable / [76] ammonestith vs by þe prophet Ieremye þat saith in þis wise [77] ¶ Stondeth vpon þe weyes and seep & axep of olde pathes þat is to sayn of old sentence which is þe good way. [78] [ . . . no gap in the MS.] and 3e schul fynde refresshyng for 3oure soules &c. [79] ¶ Many ben þe wayes espirituels þat leden folk to oure lord Ihū crist/. and to þe regne of glorie. [80] Of whiche weyes þer is a ful noble way and ful couenable which may not faile to man ne to womman þat þorugh synne hap mysгон fro þe right way of Ierusalem celestial [81] and þis wey is cleped penitence ¶ Of which men schulden gladly herken and enquere wip al here herte [82] to wyte what is penitence and whens it is cleped penitence and in what maner and in how many maners been þe acciones or workynges of penaunce [83] and how many spieces ben of penitences & whiche þinges apperteynen and byhouen to penitence. and whiche þinges destourben penitence



[84] ¶ Seint ambrose saib. þat penitence is þe pleynyng <sup>1</sup>of man for þe gult þat he hap doon. and no more to do ony þing for which him oughte to pleigne [85] ¶ And som doctour saith. penitence is waymentynyge of man þat sorweþ for his synne and peyneþ himself for he hap mysdoon [86] ¶ Penitence wip certeyn *circumstaunces*: is verray repentaunce of man þat holt himself in sorwe and in woo for his giltes [87] ¶ And for he schal be verray penitent: he schal first/ bywaile þe synnes þat he hap do and stedfastly purposen in his hert to hauen schrifte of mouth. and to doon satisfaccioun [88] and neuer to do þing for which him oughte more to bywayle or to complayne. and to continue in goode werkes or elles his repentaunce may nouȝt auayle [89] For as saith seint Isidre ¶ he is a iapere and a gabbere and no verray repentaunt þat eft soone doþ þing for which him oughte to repente: [90] wepynge. and nouȝt for to stynte to doon synne may nouȝt auayle [91] ¶ But napeles men schal hope þat at euery tyme þat men fallith. be it neuer so ofte: þat he may arise þorugh penitence if he haue *grace* ¶ But certeyn it is a gret doute. [92] For as saith seint Gregory. Vnneþe arist he out of his synne þat is charged wip þe charge of yuel vsage [93] ¶ And þerfore repentaunt folk þat stinte for to synne and forlete synne er þat synne forlete hem. holy chirche holt hem siker of her sauacioun. [94] And he þat synneth and verrailly repentith him in his last ende: holy chirche ȝit hopeþ his sauacioun by þe grete mercy of oure lord ihū crist/ for his repentaunce. but take þe siker way

[95] ¶ And now siþ þat I haue declared ȝow what þing is penitence. now schul ȝe vnderstonde þat þer ben þre acciouns of penitence [96] ¶ The first is þat if a man be baptized after þat he hap synned. [97] Seint augustyn saith but if he be penitent for his olde synful lif: he may not bygyne þe newe



clene lif [98] ¶ For certes if he be baptized wipoute penitence of his olde gilt. he receyueth þe mark of baptisme: but nouȝt þe grace ne þe remissioun of his synnes til he haue repentaunce verray [99] ¶ Anoper defaute is þis þat men doon deedly synne after þat þay haue receyued baptisme [100] ¶ þe þridde defaute is þat men fallen in to venial synne after here baptisme fro day to day. [101] þer of saip seint austyn ¶ That penitence of goode men and of humble <sup>1</sup>folk is þe penitens of euery day

[102] ¶ The spices of penitence ben thre ¶ That oon of hem is solempne ¶ Anoper is comune ¶ And þe þridde is pryue [103] ¶ Thilke penaunce þat is solempne is in tuo maners as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente for slauȝtre of childre and such maner þing [104] ¶ Anoper is whan a man hap synned openly. of which synne þe fame is openly spoken in þe contre. and þanne holy chirche by iuggement streyneth him to doon open penaunce [105] ¶ Comune penaunce is þat prestes enioynen men comunly in certeyn caas. as for to goon per aduenture naked in pilgrimage or barfot [106] ¶ Priue penaunce is þilk þat men doon alday for priue synnes of whiche we schryue vs priuely and receyuen priue penaunce

[107] ¶ Now schalt þou vnderstonde what bihoueth and is necessarie to verray parfyt penitence. and þis stondith in þre þinges [108] ¶ Contricioun of hert ¶ Confessioun of mouth ¶ And satisfaccion. [109] ¶ For whiche saith seint Iohan Crisostom ¶ penitence distreyneth a man to accepte benignely euery payne þat him is enioyned with contricioun of herte and schrift of mouth with satisfaccioun and in working of alle maner humblete [110] and þis is fruytful penitence. agayn þre þinges in whiche we wrappe our lord ihū crist/. [111] þis is to sayn by delit in þinking ¶ By rechelesnes in speking ¶ By wicked synful werkyng [112] ¶ Again þese

þre wickid gultes is penitence þat may be likned vnto a tre

[113] ¶ The roote of þis tre is contricioun þat hydiþ him in þe hert/ of him þat is verray repentaunt ¶ Right as þe roote of a tree hideþ him in þe eorþe. [114] of þe roote of contricioun springeth a stalk þat bereth braunches and leues of confessioun and fruyt of satisfaccioun [115] ¶ For whiche crist saith in his gospel ¶ Doth digne fruyt of penitence. For by þis fruyt may men knowe þis tree and nouȝt by þe roote þat is hyd in þe hert of a man ne by þe braunches ne the leuys of confessioun [116] ¶ And þerfore oure lord ihū crist saip þus ¶ By þe fruyt of hem schul ȝe knowe hem [117] ¶ Of þis roote eek springeþ a seed of grace. þe which seed is mooder of sikurnes ¶ And þis seed is egre and hoot [118] ¶ The grace of þis seed springeth of god þorugh remembraunce of þe day of doom and of þe peynes of helle [119] ¶ Of þis matier saith Salomon þat in þe drede of god man forleteth his synne [120] <sup>1</sup>¶ The hete of þis seed is þe loue of god & þe desiring of þe ioie perdurable [121] ¶ þis hete draweth þe hert of man to god and doþ him hate his synne [122] ¶ For soþe þer is no þing þat serueþ so wel to a child as þe mylk of his norice ¶ Ne no þing is to him more abhominable þan þe milk whan it is melled mete. [123] ¶ Right so þe synful man þat loueþ his synne. him semeth it is to him most swete of eny þing [124] ¶ But fro þat tyme he loueþ sadly oure lord ihū crist and desireþ þe lif perdurable. þer nys to him no þing more abhominable / [125] for soþly þe lawe of god is þe loue of god ¶ For which Dauyd saith ¶ I haue loued þy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate ¶ he þat loueþ god kepeth his lawe and his word [126] ¶ This tree saugh the prophete daniel in spirit vpon þe auysioun of Nabugodonosor whan he counseiled him to do penaunce. [127] ¶ Penaunce is tre of lif to hem þat it receyuen and þat holdeth him

*Dilexi legem tuam  
&c.*

in verray penitence is blessed after þe sentence of Salomon

[128] In þis penitence or contricioun: men schal vnderstonde foure þinges that is to sayn what is contricioun and whiche ben þe causes þat moeuen men to contricioun and how he schulde be contrit and what contricioun auaieth to þe soule [129] ¶ þanne it is þus þat contricioun is þe verray sorwe þat a man receyueþ in his herte for his synnes wiþ sad purpos to schryue him and to doo penaunce and neuer more to don synne. [130] ¶ And þis sorwe schal be in þis maner as saith seint Bernad ¶ It schal ben heuy and greuous and ful scharp and poynaunt in herte [131] ¶ First for man hap agilted his lord and his creatour and more scharp and poynaunt. For he hap agiltid his fader celestial. [132] and 3it more scharp and poynaunt for he hap wratthed and agilt him þat bouzt him wiþ his precious blood and hap delyuered vs fro þe bondes of synne and fro þe cruelte of þe deuel and fro þe peynes of helle //

[133] ¶ þe causes þat oughten to moeue a man to contricioun ben .vj. ¶ First a man schal remembre him of his synnes. [134] but loke þat þilke remembrance be to no delyt of him by no way but gret schame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob. saith þat synful men doon werkes worþy of confessioun [135] and þerfor saith Ezechiel ¶ I wol remembre alle þe 3eres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn hert. [136] and god saith in thapocalips. <sup>1</sup>Remembre 3ow from whens þat 3e ben falle. For biforn þat tyme þat 3e synned. 3e were þe children of god [ . . . . . no gap ] [137] ¶ But for 3oure synne 3e be woxe þral and foul and membres of þe feend. hate of aungels. sclaunder of holy chirche & foode of þe fals serpent. perpetual matier of þe fuyr of helle [138] ¶ and 3et more foule and abhominable For 3e trespassen so ofte tyme as doþ þe hound þat torneþ to ete his spewyng. [139] & 3et

¶ Sex sunt cause  
que mouent  
homines ad con-  
tricionem

3e ben fouler for 3oure longe continuyng<sup>t</sup> in synne and 3oure synful vsage. for whiche 3e ben roten in 3oure synne as a beest<sup>t</sup> in his donge [140] ¶ Suche maner of þoughtes make a man haue schame of<sup>t</sup> his synne and no delit. and god saip by þe prophete Izechiel [141] ¶ 3e schul remembre 3ow of 3oure weyes. & þay schal displese 3ow soply ¶ Synnes ben þe way þat leden folk<sup>t</sup> to helle

[142] ¶ The secounde cause þat<sup>t</sup> oughte make a man to haue desdeyn of<sup>t</sup> his synne is þis. þat<sup>t</sup> as seiþ seint petre / ¶ who so doth synne is þral of<sup>t</sup> synne. and synne put a man in gret<sup>t</sup> þraldom. [143] and þerfore saith þe prophete. Ezechiel. I wente sorwful in desdeyn of<sup>t</sup> myself ¶ Certes wel oughte a man haue desdeyn of<sup>t</sup> synne and wiþdrawe him fro .þat<sup>t</sup> þraldom and vilonye. [144] and lo what<sup>t</sup> saip Seneca. in þis matiere. he saip þus ¶ Though I wiste þat<sup>t</sup> god nere god. man schulde neuer knowe it: 3it<sup>t</sup> wold I haue disdeyn for to do synne [145] and þe same Seneca also saith ¶ I am born to gretter þinges þan to be þral to my body or þan for to make of<sup>t</sup> my body a þral [146] ¶ Ne a fouler þral may no man ne womman make of<sup>t</sup> his body þan 3iue his body to synne [147] ¶ And were it<sup>t</sup> þe foulest<sup>t</sup> cherl or þe foulest<sup>t</sup> womman þat<sup>t</sup> lyueþ and lest<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> value: 3et<sup>t</sup> is þanne synne more foul and more in seruitute [148] Euer fro þe heigher dege þat<sup>t</sup> man falliþ þe more he is þral and more to god vile and abhominable [149] ¶ O goode god wel oughte a man haue gret disdayn o such a þing<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> þorough synne þer he was free now is he maked bonde. [150] an þerfore seiþ seint austyn ¶ If<sup>t</sup> þou hast<sup>t</sup> disdayn [ . . . no gap] þat<sup>t</sup> þou þiself<sup>t</sup> schuldest<sup>t</sup> doon synne: haue þou þanne desdeyn þat<sup>t</sup> þou þiself<sup>t</sup> schuldiest<sup>t</sup> do synne. [151] tak<sup>t</sup> reward of<sup>t</sup> þy value þat<sup>t</sup> þou be nou3t<sup>t</sup> to foul in þiself<sup>t</sup> [152] Allas wel oughte men haue disdeyn to be

seruauntes & þralles to synne. & sore ben aschamed  
 of himself [153] þat god of his endeles <sup>1</sup>goodnes  
 hap set hem in heigh estate or zeuen hem witte. strengþ  
 of body. hele. beaute. prosperite. [154] and  
 bought hem fro þe dep wip his herte blood þat  
 þay so vnkyndely azeinst his gentilesce quyten so  
 vileynsly to slauzter of her oughne soules [155] ¶ O  
 goode god 3e wommen þat ben of so gret beaute  
 remembreþ 3ow of þe prouerbe of Salamon þat saith.  
 [156] he likeneth a fair womman þat is a fool of hir body.  
 to a ryng of gold þat were in þe groyn of a sowe  
 [157] ¶ For right as a sowe wroteþ in euerich ordure: so  
 wrootith sche hir beaute in stynkyng ordure of synne

[158] ¶ The þridde cause þat ouzte moeue a man  
 to contricioun is drede of þe day of doome. & of þe  
 horrible peynes of helle [159] ¶ For as seint Ierom saith.  
 At euery tyme þat I remembre of þe day of doom: I  
 quake [160] ¶ For whan I ete or drinke or what so þat I  
 doo euer semeth me þat þe trompe sowneþ in myn eere.  
 [161] Riseth 3e vp þat ben deede / and comeþ to þe  
 Iuggement [162] ¶ O goode god. mochil ought a man to  
 drede such a iuggement. þer as we schul be alle  
 as seiþ seint poul Biforn þe sete of our lord ihū  
 crist [163] wher as he schal make a general con-  
 gregacioun wher as no man may ben absent. [164] for  
 certes þer auayleþ non essoyne ne excusacioun  
 [165] ¶ And nouzt oonly þat oure defaute schal be  
 [ . . . . . no gap] openly  
 knowen. [166] and as seint Bernard seiþ ¶ Ther  
 schal no pleynyng auayle ne no sleight ¶ we schuln 3iue  
 rekenyng of euery ydel word [167] ¶ Ther schulle we haue  
 a Iuge þat may nouzt be disceyued ne corrupt. and why?  
 For certes alle oure þoughtes ben descouered as to him  
 ne for prayer ne for meede he nyl not / be corrupt  
 [168] ¶ And þerfor seiþ Salamon ¶ The wrappe of god ne wol  
 not be corrupt ¶ And þerfor seiþ Salomon ¶ The wrap of

god ne wol nouȝt spare no wight for praier ne for ȝifte ¶ And  
 þerfore at þe day of doome þer is noon hope to eschape  
 [169] wherfor as seint anselm seiþ ¶ Ful greet  
 anguisch schuln þe synful folk haue at þat tyme  
 [170] ¶ þere schal þe sterne and þe wroþ Iugge sitte aboue  
 and vnder him þe horrible put of helle open to de-  
 stroye him þat mot byknowe his synnes which  
 synnes openly ben schewed byforn god and biforn  
 euery creature [171] ¶ and on þe lift syde mo deuelis  
 þan herte may þynke for to hary and to drawe  
 þe synful to pyne of helle [172] ¶ And wip-  
 inne þe hertes of folk schal be þe bytyng <sup>1</sup>conscience  
 and wipoute forþ schal be þe world al breunnyng  
 [173] ¶ whider schal þanne þe wrecche synful man. Flee  
 to hyden him? Certes he may not hyde him. he moot  
 come forþ and schewe him [174] ¶ For certes as seith  
 seynt Ierom ¶ The erþe schal caste him out/ of him  
 and þe see also and þe aer also þat schal be ful of  
 þunder-clappes and lightnynges [175] ¶ Now soþly  
 who-so wel remembrith him of þese tydynges: I gesse  
 his synne schal not torne him to delit but/ to gret  
 sorw for drede of þe peyne of helle. [176] and þer-  
 fore seiþ Iob. to god ¶ Suffre lord þat I may a while  
 biwayle and wepe or I go wip oute retournynge to þe  
 derk lond couered wip derknes of dep [177]  
 to þe lond of mysese and of derknesse wher as is þe  
 shadow of deth. wher as is noon order [ne]  
 ordinaunce but grislich drede þat euer schal last [178]  
 ¶ loo her may ȝe see þat Iob prayde respit a while  
 to wepe and biwayle his trespas ¶ For forsoþe oon day of  
 respit is bettre þan al þe tresor in þis world. [179] and  
 for as moche as a man may aquyte himself byforn god  
 by penaunce in þis world and not by tresor: þerfore  
 schuld he praye to god ȝiue him respit a while to  
 wepe and to waile his trespas. [180] for certes al  
 [ . . . . . no gap]

þe world nys but a litel þing at regard of þe sorwe of helle [181] ¶ The cause why þat Iob. calleþ helle þe lond of derknes: [182] vnderstondith þat he clepith it lond or eorþe for it is stable and neuer schal fayle. derk: for he þat is in helle hat defaut/ of light material. [183] for certes þe derke light þat schal come out of þe fuyr þat euer schal brenne / schal torne him to peyne þat is in helle for it schewiþ him to þorrible deueles þat him tormenten [184] couered wiþ the derknes of deth þat is to sayn þat he þat is in helle schal haue defaute of þe sight of god ¶ For certes þe sight of god is þe lif perdurable. [185] þe derknes of deth ben þe synnes þat þe wrecchid man hap doon whiche þat stourben him to see þe face of god right as a derk cloude dop bitwixe vs and þe sonne [186] ¶ lond of myseyse: By cause þat þere ben þre maner of defautes agains þre þinges þat folk of þis world han in þis present lif þat is to sayn. honours. delices. and riches [187] ¶ Agayns honours. han þey in helle / schame and confusioun. [188] For wel 3e witen þat men clepyn honure þe reuerence þat men doon to þe man. but in helle is <sup>1</sup>noon honour ne reuerence. for certes no more reuerence schal ben doon to a kyng þan to a knaue [189] ¶ For which god saiþ by þe prophete Ieremie ¶ Thilke folk/ þat me displesen schul be despit [190] ¶ Honour is eke cleped gret lordschipe. þere schal no wight seruen opir but of harm and of torment ¶ honour eek is cleped gret dignite and heighnes: but in helle schulle þay be al fortrode of deueles [191] ¶ And god saith. thorrible deueles schuln goon and comen vpon þe heedes of dampned folk. And þis is for als moche as þe heyher þat þay were in þis present lif: þe more schuln þay ben abatid and defouled in helle [192] ¶ Agayns riches of þis world schuln þay han mysese of pouert. A þis pouert schal be in .iiij. þinges [193] In defaut of tresor of which as

dauid saith ¶ The riche folk þat embraseden and onedin  
 in al here herte þe tresor of þis world. schuln slepen in þe  
 slepyng of deth and no þing schuln þay fynde in  
 her hondes of al her tresor [194] ¶ & more-ouer þe  
 mysease of helle schal be in þe defaut of mete and  
 drink. [195] For god saith þus by moyses ¶ Thay schul  
 be wasted by hunger and þe briddes of helle schuln  
 deuoure hem wip bittir teeth and þe galle of þe  
 dragoun schal be her drink & þe venym of þe  
 dragoun here morsels [196] ¶ And forþer more ouer her  
 misease schal be in defaut of cloping/ for þay schul be naked  
 in body as of cloping ¶ For þay schuln be nakid of body  
 saue of fuyr in which þay brenne and oper filþis. [197] and  
 naked schuln þay be of soule. of alle maner vertues which  
 þat is cloping of soule ¶ wher ben þanne þe gaye  
 robes. and þe softe scheetis and þe smale schirtes. [198]  
 lo what saip of hem þe prophete Isaye  
 ¶ vnder hem schuln be strawed motthis and here  
 couertours schuln ben of wormes of helle [199] ¶ And  
 forþer mor ouer here disease schal be in defaute of  
 frendes. for he is not pouere that haþ goode frendes.  
 but here is no frend. [200] For neyþer god ne no  
 creature schal be frend vnto hem. and euerich of hem  
 schal hate oper wip dedly hate [201] ¶ The sones and  
 the douȝtres schuln rebellen agayns þe fader and þe mooder  
 and kynrede agayns kynrede and chiden and despisen  
 euerich of hem oper boþe day and night. as god saith  
 by þe prophete Michias [202] ¶ And þe louyng children  
 þat whilom <sup>1</sup>loueden so fleisschliche euerych oper: wolden  
 euerych of hem eten oper if þay miȝten [203] for how  
 schulden þay louen hem togider in þe peyne of helle: whan  
 þay hated euerych of hem oper in þe prosperite of þis lif.  
 [204] For trustith wel her fleisschly loue was dedly hate  
 as saip þe prophete dauid. who-so þat loueth wickid-  
 nes hateþ his soule. [205] And who-so hatip  
 his oughne soule. certis he may loue noon oper wight



in no manere [206] ¶ And þerfore in helle is no solace  
 ne frendschipe. but euer þe more fleshly kynredes  
 þat ben in helle: þe more cursynges þe more chyd-  
 ynges and þe more deedly hate þer is among hem  
 [207] And forþer ouer þay schul haue defaute of alle  
 manere delices ¶ For certis delices ben þe appetites  
 of þy fyue wittes as sight hieryng. smellyng. saur-  
 ing and touching [208] ¶ But in helle here sight schal be  
 ful of derknesse / and of smoke and þerfore ful of  
 teeris. and her hieryng ful of waymentyng and of  
 gruntyng of teeth as saip iñū crist // [209] ¶ here nose  
 þurles schuln ben ful of stynkyng stynk. and as saith  
 ysaye þe prophete ¶ here sauringe schal be ful of bitter  
 galle. [210] and touchyng of al here body y-couered  
 with fuyr þat neuer schal quenche / and wip wormes  
 þat neuer schuln deyen / as god saip by þe moup of  
 ysaie [211] ¶ And for al so moche as þay schul nouzt/ wene/  
 þat þay may deyen for peyne / and by here deth fle fro  
 peyne. þat may þay vnderstonde in þe word of Iob /  
 þat saip ¶ Ther as is þe schadow of deth [212] ¶ Certes  
 a schadow hap þe liknesse of the þing of which it is  
 a schadow. [ . . . . .  
*no gap*] [213] Right so fareth þe peyne of helle. it is  
 lik deþ. for þe horrible anguisse. And why: for it  
 peyneþ hem euer as though men scholden deye anon. But  
 certes þay schul not deye. [214] For as saith *Seint*  
*GreGory* ¶ To wrecchid caytifs shal be ȝiue deth wipoute  
 deth and ende wipouten ende / and defaute withouten  
 faylinge. [215] For here deth schal alway lyuen. and here  
 ende schal euermore bygynne. and here defaute schal not  
 fayle [216] ¶ And þerfor saip seint Iohan þe  
 euangelist ¶ þay schul folwe deþ. and þay schuln  
 nouzt fynde him. and þay schul desire to deyen And deth  
 schal flee fro hem. [217] ¶ and eek Iob. saip. þat in helle  
 is noon ordre of rule [218] ¶ And al be it þat god hap  
 creat al þing in right ordre and no þing wip-

oute ordre. but <sup>1</sup>alle þinges ben ordeyned and noum-  
 bred: ȝit napeles þay þat ben dampned been nouȝt  
 in ordre ne holden non ordre [219] For þe  
 eorþe schal bere hem no fruyt [220] ¶ For as þe prophete  
 dauid saiþ. God schal destroye þe fruyt of þe eorþe as  
 for hem. ne watir schal ȝiue hem no moysture ne  
 þe aier non refreisching. ne fuyr no light. [221] For as  
 seiþ seint Basile ¶ The brennyng of þe fuyr of þis  
 world schal god ȝiue in helle to hem þat ben dampnyd.  
 [222] But þe light and þe clernesse / schal be ȝeue to  
 heuene to his children. Right as þe goode man ȝeue  
 fleisch to his children and bones to his houndes / [223]  
 ¶ And for þay schul haue noon hope to eschape. saiþ seint  
 Iob. atte laste þat þer schal horroure and grisly drede  
 duelle wipouten ende [224] ¶ horroure is alway drede  
 of harm þat is to come. and þis drede schal euer duelle  
 in þe hertes of hem þat ben dampnyd. And þerfore  
 han þay lorn al here hope for vij. causes [225] ¶ First /  
 for god þat is here Iugge schal be wipoute mercy to  
 hem ne þay may not please him ne noon of his  
 halwes Ne þey may ȝiue no þing for here raunsoun /  
 [226] ne þay haue no voice to speke to him. ne þay  
 may not fle fro peyne. ne þay haue no goodnes in  
 hem. þat þay may schewe to deliuere hem fro peyne  
 [227] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salomon / The wikked man  
 deyeth. and whan he is deed: he schal haue noon hope to  
 eschape fro peyne [228] ¶ who-so wolde þanne wel vn-  
 derstonde þese peynes and bythynk him wel þat he  
 haþ deserued þilke peynes for his synnes ¶ Certes he  
 schulde haue more talent to sikyn and to wepe þan for  
 to synge or pleye [229] ¶ For as þat Salamon saiþ  
 ¶ who-so þat þe science to knowe þe peynes þat  
 ben establid and ordeynt for synne: he wolde make  
 sorwe [230] ¶ Thilke science as saiþ seint austyn  
 makeþ a man to wayment in his herte

[231] ¶ The fourþe poynt þat oughte make a man

haue contricioun is þe sorwful remembraunce of þe  
 good þat he hath left to doon heer in eorþe. and  
 eek þe good þat he hap lorn [232] ¶ Soply þe goode  
 werkes þat he hath left: eyþer þay been þe goode  
 werkes þat he wrought er he fel in to dedly synne:  
 or elles þai ben þe goode werkes þat he [ . . . . .  
 . . . [233] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] dede  
 er he fel into synne ben amortised. and astoneyed  
 and dullid by ofte synnyng. [234] þat opere  
 goode werkes that he wrouȝte whil he lay in dedly  
 synne been outrely deede <sup>1</sup>as to þe lif perdurable in  
 heuen. [235] þanne þilke goode werkes þat ben  
 mortified by ofte synnyng<sup>1</sup> whiche goode werkes he dede  
 whiles he was in charite ne mowe neuer quyken agayn  
 withouten verray penitence. [236] And þerof saith god  
 by þe mouth of Ezechiel ¶ That if þe rightful man re-  
 tourne agayn fro his rightwisnesse and werke wikked-  
 nesse. schal he liue: [237] nay. For alle þe goode werkes  
 þat he hap wrought ne schuln neuer be in remembrance  
 for he schal dye in his synne. [238] And vpon þilke  
 chapitre saith seint Gregory þus. þat we schuln vnder-  
 stonde þis principally. [239] That whan we doon dedly  
 synne it is for nouȝt þanne to reherse or to drawe in to  
 memorie þe goode werkes þat we han wrought biforn.  
 [240] For certis in þe werkyng of þe dedly synne  
 þer is no trust to no good werkes that we han don biforne  
 þis tyme. þat is to say as for to haue þerby þe lif per-  
 durable in heuen. [241] But napeles þe goode  
 werkes quiken agayn and comen again and helpen and  
 auailen to haue þe lif perdurable in heuen whan we  
 han contricioun [242] ¶ But soply þe goode werkes þat  
 men doon whil þat þai ben in dedly synne. for as moche  
 as þay were doon in dedly synne: þay may neuer quyken  
 [ . . [243] . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ And al be it þat þay  
 auailen not to haue þe lif perdurable: ȝit auaylen

þay to abbrigging<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> þe peyne of<sup>t</sup> helle or elles to gete  
 temporal riches. [244] Or elles þat<sup>t</sup> god wol þe  
 raper enlumyne and lightene þe hert<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> þe synful  
 man to haue repentaunce. [245] and eek<sup>t</sup> þey auailen  
 for to vsen a man to do goode werkes þat<sup>t</sup> þe feend  
 haue þe lasse power of<sup>t</sup> his soule. [246] ¶ And þus þe  
 curteys lord ihū crist<sup>t</sup> ne wolde nouȝt<sup>t</sup> no good werk<sup>t</sup>  
 be lost<sup>t</sup>. For in som what<sup>t</sup> it schal auaille. [247] But<sup>t</sup> for als  
 moche as þe goode werkes þat<sup>t</sup> men don whil þay  
 ben in good lif<sup>t</sup> ben amortised by synne folwyng<sup>t</sup>  
 and eek<sup>t</sup> sith þat<sup>t</sup> alle the goode werkes þat<sup>t</sup> men doon  
 whil þay ben in dedly synne been outrely deede  
 as for to haue þe lif<sup>t</sup> perdurable: [248] wel may þat<sup>t</sup> man  
 þat<sup>t</sup> no goode werkes werkip synge þilke newe freisch song<sup>t</sup>.  
 Iay tout<sup>t</sup> perdu moun temps et moun labour [249] For  
 certis synne byreueth a man boþe goodnes of<sup>t</sup> nature  
 and eek<sup>t</sup> þe goodnes of<sup>t</sup> grace [250] ¶ For soþly  
 þe grace of<sup>t</sup> þe holy gost<sup>t</sup> fareþ lik fyre þat<sup>t</sup> may not<sup>t</sup>  
 ben ydel. For fuyr as it forletip his werk-  
 yng<sup>t</sup> it faileth anon ¶ And right<sup>t</sup> so whan þe grace  
 faileþ: [251] þan lesith þe synful man þe goodnes  
 of<sup>t</sup> glorie þat<sup>t</sup> oonly is byhight<sup>t</sup> <sup>1</sup>to goode men þat<sup>t</sup> labouren  
 and werken [252] ¶ wel may he be sory þanne þat<sup>t</sup>  
 oweth al his lif<sup>t</sup> to god as longe as he haþ lyued and  
 eek<sup>t</sup> as longe as he schal lyue. þat<sup>t</sup> no goodnes ne hath  
 to paye wip his dette to god to whom he oweth al his  
 lyf<sup>t</sup>. [253] For trusteþ wel he schal ȝiue accompt<sup>t</sup> as seiþ  
 seint Bernard of<sup>t</sup> alle þe goodes þat<sup>t</sup> han be ȝeuen him  
 in þis present lif<sup>t</sup>. & how he hath hem dispendid.  
 [254] nat<sup>t</sup> so moche þat<sup>t</sup> þer ne schal not perische an heer  
 of<sup>t</sup> his heed ne a moment<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> an hour ne schal not perische  
 of his tyme þat<sup>t</sup> he ne schal ȝiue of it a rekenyng.

[255] ¶ The .v<sup>te</sup>. maner of contricioun þat<sup>t</sup> moeueþ a man  
 þerto is þe remembraunce of<sup>t</sup> þe passioun þat<sup>t</sup> oure lord  
 ihū crist<sup>t</sup> suffred for. vs and for our synnes [256] ¶ For as seiþ  
 seint Bernard whil þat<sup>t</sup> I lyue I schal haue remem-

braunce of þe passioun þat oure lord ihū crist suffred for  
 vs in preching. [257] his werynesse in traunayling his tempt-  
 acioun whan he fastid. his longe wakinges whan he  
 prayde his teeres whan he wepte for pite of  
 good peple [258] þe wo and þe schame and þe  
 filthe þat men saide to him ofte foul spittyng  
 þat men spitten on his face. Of þe buffettis þat men  
 gaf him of þe foule mowes and of þe re-  
 proues þat men to him saiden [259] of þe nayles  
 with whiche he was nayled to þe cros and of al þe  
 remenaunt of his passioun þat he suffred for my synnes  
 and no þing for his gilt [260] ¶ And 3e schal vnder-  
 stonde þat in mannes synne is euery maner ordre  
 of ordinaunce turned vpsodoun. [261] ¶ For it is soþ  
 þat god & resoun and sensualite and þe body of man  
 be so ordeyned that euerich of þese .iiij.  
 schulde haue lordschipe ouer [ . . . [262] . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] resoun and resoun ouer  
 sensualite. and sensualite ouer þe body of man.  
 [263] ¶ But soþly whan man synnep al þis ordre or  
 ordinaunce is torned vpsodoun [264] and  
 þanne for as moche as þe resoun of a man ne wol not be  
 subiect ne obeissant to god þat is his lord by right: þer-  
 fore lesith it þe lordschipe þat it schulde haue in  
 sensualite and eek ouer þe body of man. [265] And  
 why? For sensualite rebellith þanne agayns resoun. And  
 by þat way lesith resoun þe lordschipe ouer sensualite  
 and ouer þe body. [266] For right as resoun is rebel to  
 god: Right so is boþe sensualite rebel to resoun and  
 þe body also [267] And certis þis disordynaunce and  
 þis rebelloun oure lord ihū crist bought vpon his  
 precious body ful deere ¶ And herkeneth in which wise  
 [268] <sup>1</sup>¶ For as moche as resoun is rebel to god: þer-  
 fore is man worþy to haue sorwe and to be deed.  
 [269] þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for man and after þat  
 he was bytraysed of his disciple and destreyned and

bounde so þat þe blood brast out at euery nayl of his  
 hondes as saith seint austyn [270] ¶ And forþer ouer  
 for as mochil as resoun of man wol nought daunte sensu-  
 alite whan it may þerfore is man worpy to haue schame  
 ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for man whan þay  
 spitten in his face [271] And forþer ouer þanne for as  
 moche as þe caytif body of man is rebelle  
 boþe to resoun and to sensualite. þerfore it is worpy þe  
 deth [272] ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihū crist for vs  
 vpon þe croys wher as þer was no part of his body  
 fre wipoute gret peyne and bitter passioun [273]  
 ¶ And al þis suffred ihū crist þat neuer forfeþed.  
 [ . . . . .  
*no gap in the MS.*] So mochil am I streyned for þe  
 þinges þat I neuer deseruyd and to moche defouled  
 for schendschip þat man is worthy to haue [274] And þer-  
 fore may þe synful man wel saye as saith sent Bernard  
 ¶ Acursed be þe bitterness. [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [275] For certis  
 after þe dyuers discordaunces of oure wickednes was  
 þe passioun of oure lord ihū crist ordeyned in diuers þinges  
 [276] ¶ As þus. Certis sinful mannes soule is bytraysid  
 of þe deuel by coueitise of temporal prosperite and  
 scorned by disceyt whan he chesep fleischly delytes and  
 ȝit is it tormentid by impaciencce of aduersite and byspit  
 by seruage and subieccioun of synne. and atte last it is  
 slayn finally [277] ¶ For þis discordaunce of synful man  
 was Ihū crist first bytraised and after was he bounde  
 that com for to vnbynden vs fro synne and of peyne [278]  
 ¶ Than was he scorned: þat oonly schulde be  
 honoured in alle þing of alle þinges. [279]  
 ¶ Than was his visage þat oughte be desired to be say  
 of al man-kynde. In which visage aungels desiren to  
 loke vileynsly byspit. [280] Thanne was he scorned  
 þat no þing had agilt. and fynally þanne was he  
 crucified and slayn [281] Thanne was accomplished þe

word of ysaye ¶ He was woundid for  
 oure mysdede and defouled by oure felonyes [282]  
 ¶ Now sith ihū crist tok vpon him þilke  
 peyne of alle oure wikkednes: Mochil oughte synful  
 men wepe and bywayle þat for his synnes schulde goddes  
 sone of heuene al þis endure [283] ¶ The .vj<sup>te</sup>.  
 þing þat ouzte to moeue a man to contricioun is þe hope  
 of þre þinges. þat is to sayn. forzeuenes of synne  
 and þe gifte of grace wel<sup>1</sup> for to do. and þe glorie of  
 heuen wip which god schal guerdoun man for his  
 goode deedis [284] ¶ And for als moche as ihū crist  
 zeueth vs þese giftes of his largesse and of his souerayn  
 bounte: þerfore is he cleped. Ihc nazareus rex  
 Iudeorum [285] ¶ Ihū is for to say saueour or sa-  
 uacioun of whom me schal hope to haue forzeuenes of  
 synnes which þat is proprely sauacioun of synnes  
 [286] ¶ And þerfore seyde þe aungel to Ioseph ¶ Thow  
 clepe his name Ihc þat schal saue his poeple of here  
 synnes [287] ¶ And her of saith Seint petir ¶ Ther is  
 noon oþer name vnder heuen þat is zeue to any man  
 by which a man may be sauýd. but oonly Ihc [288]  
 nazareus is as moche to say as florischinge in  
 which a man schal hope þat he þat zeueth him remissioun  
 of synnes schal giue him grace wel wel to doo ¶ For  
 in þe flour is hope of fruyt / in tyme comynge. And in  
 forziuenes hope of grace wel to do [289] ¶ I  
 was at þe dore of þin herte saip Ihc and cleped for to  
 entre. he þat openith to me. schal haue forzeuenes of  
 synne. [290] I wol entre into him by my grace and  
 soupe with him by þe goode workes þat he schal doon  
 whiche werkes ben þe foode of god ¶ And he schal soupe  
 wip me by þe grete ioye þat I schal giue him [291]  
 ¶ Thus schal man hope þat for his werkis of penaunce  
 god schal giue him his regne as he bihetith him in þe  
 gospel

[292] Now schal man vnderstonde in what

[<sup>1</sup> *long 285, back*]

maner schal be his contricioun ¶ I say it schal  
 be vniuersal and total ¶ þis is to say. a man schal be  
 verray repentaunt for alle his synnes þat he hap doon in  
 delyt of his þought for delit is ful perilous [293] ¶ For þer  
 ben tuo maners of consentynge [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap*] of affecciou whan a man is moeued  
 to synne & delitith him longe for to þinke on  
 þat synne. [294] and his resoun aparceyueth wel þat  
 it is synne agayns þe lawe of god. & 3it his resoun  
 refreyneþ not his foule delit or talent þough he seth wel  
 apertly þat it is aʒenst/ þe reuerence of god al þough  
 his resoun consente not to do þe synne in dede:  
 [295] 3it sayn some doctours delyt þat  
 duellith longe it is ful perilous al be it neuer so lite  
 [296] ¶ And also a man schulde sorwe namely for al  
 þat he hap desired agayn þe lawe of god wip  
 parfyt consentynge of his hert and of his resoun ¶ For þerof  
 is no doute þat it is dedly synne [297] [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap*] þat it nas first in mannes  
 þought. & after þat in his delit/ and so forþ in to  
 consentynge and in to dede [298] ¶ wherfore say I þat  
 many men repente hem neuer <sup>1</sup>of suche þoughtes and  
 delitis. ne neuer schriue hem of hit. but oonly of þe  
 dede of grete synnes outward [299] ¶ wherfore I say  
 þat suche wickid delitis and wickid þouʒtes ben  
 subtile bigilours of hem þat schuln be dampned [300]  
 ¶ More ouer man oughȝe to sorwe for his wicked  
 wordes as wel as his wikked dedes. For certis  
 þe repentaunce of a singuler synne & nouʒt repente of alle  
 his oper synnes [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap*] may nouʒt  
 auaille [301] ¶ For certis god almighty is al good and  
 þerfore he forʒeueth al or elles right nouʒt [302]  
 ¶ And here-of seiþ seint augustin ¶ I wot certeynly þat  
 god is enemy to euery synnere [303] ¶ And how þanne he  
 þat obseruith oon synne schal he haue remissioun of þe



remenant<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> his oper synnes! Nay. [304] And forþer ouer contricioun schulde be woundes sorwful and anguisschous and þerfore 3iueth him god plainly his mercy ¶ And þerfore whan my soule was anguissheous wipinne me! I hadde remembraunce of<sup>t</sup> god þat<sup>t</sup> my prayer mighte come to him [305] ¶ And forþer ouer. contricioun moste be continually and þat<sup>t</sup> a man haue stedefast<sup>t</sup> purpos to schryue him and for to amende him of his lyf<sup>t</sup> [306] ¶ For soþly whil contricioun lastith man may euer hope of<sup>t</sup> forȝeuenes and of<sup>t</sup> þis comeþ hate of<sup>t</sup> synne þat destroyeth synne boþe in himself and eek<sup>t</sup> in oper folk<sup>t</sup> at his power [307] ¶ And þerfore saith dauid. 3e þat<sup>t</sup> louen god! hatith wikkidnesse. For trustiþ wel for to loue god. is for to loue þat<sup>t</sup> he loueþ. and hate þat he hatiþ

[308] ¶ The laste þing<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> a man schuld vnderstonde in contricioun is þis. wher of<sup>t</sup> auailith contricioun ¶ I say þat<sup>t</sup> som tyme contricioun deliuereþ man fro synne [309] of which þat dauid saith ¶ I say quod dauid. þat<sup>t</sup> is to say. I purposid fermely to schryue me and þou lord reledest<sup>t</sup> my synne [310] ¶ And right<sup>t</sup> so as contricioun auailith nat<sup>t</sup> wipoute sad purpos of schrifte if<sup>t</sup> man haue oportunité! Right<sup>t</sup> so. litil worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun wipoute contricioun [311] ¶ And more ouer contricioun destruyeth þe prisoun of helle and makith wayk<sup>t</sup> and feble þe strengthes of<sup>t</sup> þe deueles and restorith þe 3ift<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> þe holy gost/ and of<sup>t</sup> alle vertues [312] and it clensith þe soule of synnes and deliuereþ þe soule fro þe peynes of helle and fro þe companye of<sup>t</sup> þe deuel and fro þe seruage of<sup>t</sup> synne and restorith to alle goode espiritueles in to þe companye & communioun of<sup>t</sup> holy chirche [313] ¶ And forþer ouer it makith him þat<sup>t</sup> som tyme was sone of Ire! <sup>1</sup>sone of grace ¶ And alle þese þinges he prouith by holy writte. [314] And þerfore he þat wil sette his herte to þese þinges! he were ful

wys ¶ For soþe he scholde not þanne in al his lyf  
 haue corrage to synne. but ȝiuen his body and al his herte  
 to þe seruice of Ihū crist and þerof do him  
 homage [315] ¶ For certis oure swete lord ihū crist  
 hap sparid vs so debonerly in oure folyes. þat if he ne  
 hadde pite of mannes soule: sory songe mighte we alle  
 synge. ¶ **Explicit prima pars Incipit secunda pars**  
**eiusdem**

[*No break in the MS.*]

[316]

**T**He secounde partye of penitence is confessioun.  
 þat is signe of contricioun [317] ¶ Now schul ȝe  
 vnderstonde what is confessioun and wheþir  
 it oughte needes be doon or noon. A whiche  
 ben conuenable to verray confessioun

[318] ¶ First schalt þou vnderstonde þat confessioun is  
 verrey schewyng of synnes to þe prest [319] þis is to  
 sayn verray. For he moot schewe him of alle þe  
 condiciouns þat ben longynge to his synne as ferforth as he  
 can [320] al mot be sayd and nouȝt excused ne  
 hyd ne forwrappid and nouȝt auaunte him of his goode  
 werkis [321] ¶ And forþermore it is necessary to vnder-  
 stonde whens þat synnes springe and how þay  
 exersen. and whiche þer ben

[322] of þe springing of synnes as seint poul saip  
 in þis wise ¶ That right as by a man synne entred first  
 in to þis world. and þorugh þat synne deth: Right so  
 þilke deth entred in to alle men þat synned. [323]  
 and þis man was adam by whom þat synne entred in to  
 þis world whan he brak þe comaundement of god.  
 [324] And þerfore he þat first was so mighty þat he  
 schulde not haue deyed bicam sippe on þat he moste  
 needis deye wheþir he wolde or noon and al his progenie  
 þat is in þis world þat in þilke manner synned [325] ¶ Ioke  
 þat in þe / .testate of Innocence whan adam and Eue

makid were in paradys and no þing schame ne hadden  
 of her nakidnesse. [326] how þat þe serpent þat was  
 most wyly of alle oper bestis þat god hadde makid  
 sayde to þe womman ¶ why comaundid god to 3ow  
 3e schulde nouȝt ete of euery tree in paradys [327] ¶ The  
 womman answerde ¶ Of þe fruyt quod sche of þe trees  
 in paradys we feede vs ¶ But sople of þe fruyt of þe  
 tre þat is in þe myddil of paradis. god forbad vs  
 for to eten ne not touche it lest perauenture we schulde  
 1deye [328] ¶ The serpent sayde to þe womman. Nay  
 nay. 3e schal not drede of deth for soþe god wot þat  
 what day 3e ete þerof 3oure eyen schal open  
 and 3e schul ben as goddis knowing good and harm  
 [329] ¶ The womman saugh þe tree was good  
 to feedyng. and fair to eyen and delitable to  
 sight. She tok of þe fruyt of þe tree and eet it and  
 3af it to hir housbond And he eet it ¶ And anon þe eyen of  
 hem boþe openeden [330] And whan þat þay knewe  
 þat þay were naked: þay sowede of fige leues in maner  
 of breches to hiden here membris [331] ¶ here may 3e  
 see þat dedly synne hap first suggestioun of þe  
 feend as schewep here by þe neddir. and aftirward  
 þe delit of þe fleisch as scheweth here by eua. and  
 after þat þe consentyng of resoun as schewith by  
 adam [332] ¶ For trustip wel þough so were þat þe  
 feend temptid oon. þat is to sayn þe fleissch  
 hadde delit in þe beaute of þe fruyt defendid.  
 ȝit certes til þat resoun þat is to say adam con-  
 sentid to þe etyng of þe fruyt/. ȝit stood he in þa staat  
 of Innocence [333] ¶ Of þilke adam took we þilke  
 synne original. for of him flesschly descendit be we alle.  
 and engendrit of vile and corrupt m[a]tiere [334] ¶ And  
 whan þe soule is put in oure body right anon is con-  
 tract original synne. [. . . . .]  
 . . . . .  
 . . no gap] [335] and þerfore be we alle I-born sones of

wrappe and of dampnacioun perdurable if it nere baptisme  
 þat we resceyuen which bynymeþ vs þe culpe ¶ But for-  
 soþe þe peyne duellip wip vs as to temptacioun which  
 peyne highte concupiscence [336] ¶ And þis concupiscence  
 whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man: hit  
 makith him to coueyte couetise of fleisschly synne by sight  
 of his eyzen as to erþely þinges. and eek coueityse of heigh-  
 nesse as by pride of herte

[337] Now as to speke of þe firste coueitise  
 þat is concupiscence after þe lawe of oure membris  
 þat is [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . [338] . . . . . *no gap*] nouȝt  
 obeissant to god þat is lord þerfore is fleissch to  
 him disobeissant þurgh concupiscence which þat ȝit is  
 clepid norisshing of synne [ . . . . . *no gap*]  
 [339] ¶ Therefore al þe while þat a man haþ in him þe  
 peyne of concupiscence it is impossible but he be  
 tempted som tyme and moeued in his fleisch to synne /.  
 [340] ¶ And þis may not faile as longe as he lyueþ  
 ¶ hit may wel wexe feble and faille by vertu of baptisme  
 and by þe grace of god þorugh penitence. [341] but  
 fully schal it neuer <sup>1</sup>quenche þat he schal som  
 tyme be moeued in himself but if he were al refreydit by  
 siknes or by malice of sorserye or colde drinkes  
 [342] ¶ For what saip seint poul ¶ The fleissch coueitith  
 agayn þe spirit. and þe spirit agayn þe fleisch þay  
 ben so contrarie and so stryuen þat a man may nouȝt  
 alwey do as he wolde [343] ¶ The same seint poul  
 after his penaunce in watir and in lond. in watir  
 by night and by day in gret peril and in gret peyne  
 in lond and in famyne. and in þurst and colde. and cloþes  
 oones almost stoned al to þe deth [344] ¶ ȝit saide he  
 alas I caytif man. who schal delyuere me fro þe prisoun  
 of my caytif body [345] And seint Ierom. whan he  
 long tyme had woned in desert here wher as he hadde no  
 compaignye but of wilde bestes wher as he hadde

no mete but herbes & water to his drink. ne non bed but þe nakid erþe. For which his fleisch was as blak as an Ethiopen for hete and neigh destroyed for cold [346] ¶ 3it sayde he þat þe brennyng of lechery boylid in al his body [347] ¶ wherfore I wot wel sicurly þat þay be desceyued þat say þay ben not temptid in here body. [348] ¶ witnesse on seint Iame thapostil þat saith. þat euery wight is tempted in his oughne concupiscence þat is to sayn þat euerych of vs hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of þe norischyng of synne þat is in his body [349] ¶ And þerfore seint Iohan þe Euangelist saith ¶ If þat we sayn we be wipoute synne: we deceyue oure silf and troupe is nought in vs

[350] ¶ Now schal 3e vnderstonde in what maner þat synne waxip and encresceth in a man ¶ The firste þing is þilke norischyng of synne of which I spak byforn þilke concupiscence. [351] And after þat cometh þe Subieccioun of þe deuel. þis is to sayn þe deueles bely with which he blowep in man þe fuyr of fleisschly concupiscence [352] And after þat a man by-think him wheþir he wol don it/ or non. þilke þing to which he is tempted. [353] ¶ and þanne if þat a man wipstonde and wayue þe firste entisynges of his fleisshe and of þe feend it is no synne. and if so be he do not so: þanne fleeth he anon a flame of delit/ [354] and þanne it is good to be war and kepe him wel or ellis he wil falle anon in to consentyng of synne / and þanne wol he do it if he may haue tyme and space and place [355] ¶ And of þis matere saith Moyses by þe deuel in þis manere ¶ þe feend <sup>1</sup>saith. // I wol chace and pursewe þe man by wickid suggestiouns and I wil hent him by moeuyng or steryng of synne and I wil parte my prise or my pray by deliberacioun and my lust schal be accomplisit in delit. I wil drawe my sword in consentynge [356] ¶ For certes right as a sward departip a þing in tuo parties right

so consentynge departeþ god fro man and þanne wol I sle him with my hond in dede of synne. þus saith þe feend. [357] For certis þanne is a man al deed in soule and þus is synne accomsid by temptacioun by delit and by consentyng and þanne is þe synne cleped actual

[358] ¶ For soþe synne is in two maneres. ouþer it is venial or dedly synne. Sothly whan man louith any creature more þan ihū crist/ oure creatour: þanne it is dedly synne. And venial synne is. if a man loue ihū crist lasse þan him oughte [359] ¶ For soþe þe dede of þis venial synne is ful perilous. For it amenisith þe loue þat men schulde haue to god more and more [360] ¶ And þerfore if a man charge more himself with many suche venial synnes. Certes but if so be þat he som tyme discharge him of hem by schrifte: þay may ful lightly amenise in him al þe loue þat he hath to ihū crist [361] and in þis wise skippith venial in to dedly synne. ¶ For certes þe more þat a man chargith his soule wip venial synnes: þe more is he enclyned to falle in deedly synne [362] ¶ And þerfore let vs nouȝt be negligent to discharge vs of venial synnes ¶ For the prouerbe saith. þat many smale makith a gret [363] ¶ And herken þis ensample ¶ A greet wawe of þe see comeþ som tyme wip so gret a violence þat it drenchith þe schip. and þe same harm doon som tyme smale droppis of water þat entrith þurgh a litil creues in to þe thurrok and in to þe bothum of a schip if men be so neggligent þat þay discharge it nouȝt by tyme [364] ¶ And þerfore al þough þer be differrance bitween þese tuo causes of drenching. algates the schip is dreynt [365] ¶ Right so farith it som tyme of dedly synne and of anoyous venial synnes whan þay multiplien in a man so gretly þat þilke worldly þynges þat he loueth þurgh which he sinneth venially is as gret in his herte as þe loue of god or more [366]

¶ And þerfore þe loue of euery þing þere is not byset in god ne doon principally for goddes sake / al þough a man loue it lasse þan god. 3it is it venial synne [367] <sup>1</sup>And deedly synne whan þe loue of eny þing weyeth in þe hert of a man as moche as þe loue of god or more [368] ¶ Dedly synne is as saith seint austyn. whan man torneth his hert from god which þat is verray souerayn bounte þat may not chaunge and flitte. and 3iue his herte to a þing þat may chaunge and flitte. [369] and certes þat is euery þing saue god of heuen ¶ For soþe if þat a man 3iue his loue þe which that he owip to god wip al his herte vnto a creature. certes as moche of loue as he 3iueþ to þilke creature. so moche he reueth fro god. [370] and þerfore doth he synne. ¶ For he þat is dettour to god and 3eldeth not his dette þat is to sayn al þe loue of his hert

[371] ¶ Now sippe man vnderstondith generally which is venial synne. þanne is it couenable to telle specially of synnes whiche þat many man perauenture ne demith hem no synnes and schryueth him not of þe same þinges and 3it napeles þay ben synnes [372] ¶ And soþly as clerkes writen þis is to say. at euery tyme þat man etith or drinkith more þan suffiseþ to þe sustienauce of his body in certeyn he doþ synne. [373] and eek whan he spekith more þan it needith he doþ synne. and eek whan he herkeneth nouȝt benignely þe pleynt of þe pore [374] eek whan he is in hele of body and wil not faste whan oper folk fasten wipouten cause resonable. / eek whan he slepith more þan needith or whan he comeþ by þilk enchesoun to late to holy chirche or to oper werkes of charite [375] Eke whan he vseþ his wyf wipoute souerayn desir of engendrure to thonour of god and for þentent to 3elde to his wyf þe dette of his body. [376] eek whan he wil not visite þe sike and þe prisoner if he may

¶ eek' if he loue wyf or child or oþer worldly þing' more þan resoun requireth. eek' if he flatere or blaundisshe more þan him oughte for eny necessite [377] ek' if a man menuse or wipdrawe þe almesse of þe pouere eek' if he apparaylith his body more deliciously þan it nedith or ete it to hastily by licouresnes. [378] eek' if he talke of vanitees at chirche or at goddis seruice. or þat he be a talkere of ydil wordes of vanite or of vilonye / for he schal ȝelde of hem acount at þe day of doome. [379] eek' whan he heetith or assureth to do þinges þat he may nouȝt performe. eek' whan þat by lightnes or foly he myssaith or scorneþ his <sup>1</sup>neighebor. [380] eek' whan he haþ any wicked suspeccioun of þing' þat he wot of it no sothfastnesse. [381] þese þinges and mo wipoute nombre ben synnes as saith seint austyn

[382] ¶ Now schal men vnderstonde þat al be it so þat noon erpely man may eschiewe alle venial synnes: ȝif may he refreyne hem by þe brennyng' loue þat he haþ to oure lord ihū crist and by prayeres and by confessioun and oþer goode werkes. so þat it schal but litil greue [383] ¶ For as saith seint austyn ¶ ȝif a man loue god in such a maner þat al þat euer he doth is in þe loue of god or for þe loue of god verrailly for he brenneþ in þe loue of god [384] ¶ loke how moche þat a drope of watir þat fallith in a furneys ful of fuyr annoyeth of greueth: So moche annoyeth a venial synne vnto a man þat is perfyt in þe loue of ihū crist [385] ¶ Men may also refreyne venial synne vnto a man by resceyuyng' of þe precious body of ihū crist / [386] by receyuyng' eek' of holy water. by almes dede. by general confessioun of Confiteor at masse and at complyn and blessing' of bisschops and of prestes and by oþer goode werkis

[No break in the MS.]



[387] ¶ Now it is bihouely þing<sup>t</sup> to telle whiche ben dedly synnes þat<sup>t</sup> is to sayn chiueteyns of synnes. alle þay renne in oon loos. but<sup>t</sup> in diuers maners now ben þay cleped chiueteyns. For als moche as þay ben chief<sup>t</sup> and springers of alle opere synnes [388] ¶ Of þe roote of þese seuen synnes; þanne is pride þe general synne and roote of alle harmes ¶ For of þis roote springen general braunches. As Ire. Enuye. accidie or sleuthe. auarice or coueitise. to commune vnderstondynge. glotonye and leccherie [389] ¶ And euerich of þese synnes hath his braunches and his twigges as schal be declarid in here chapitres folwinge.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[390] and þough so be þat<sup>t</sup> no man can telle vtterly þe nombre of þe twigges and of þe harm þat<sup>t</sup> cometh of pride: 3it<sup>t</sup> wol I schewe a party of hem as 3e schul vnderstonde [391] ¶ Ther is Inobedience. auauntyng<sup>t</sup>. ypocrisye. despit<sup>t</sup>. arragaunce. Imprudence. Swellyng<sup>t</sup> of hert<sup>t</sup>. Insolence. Elacioun. [ . . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] pertinacie. veinglorie. and many anoper twigge þat<sup>t</sup> I can not<sup>t</sup> telle ne declare [392] Inobedient<sup>t</sup> is he þat<sup>t</sup> disobeieth for despyt<sup>t</sup> to þe comaunderment<sup>3</sup> of god and to his souereigns. and to his gostly fader. [393] Auauntour is he þat<sup>t</sup> bosteth of þe harm or of þe bounte þat<sup>t</sup> he hap<sup>3</sup> don [394] ¶ ypocrisy is þat<sup>t</sup> <sup>1</sup>hydeth to schewe him such as he is and scheweth him such as he not<sup>t</sup> is [395] ¶ Despitous is he þat<sup>t</sup> hap<sup>3</sup> desdayn of his neighebour þat<sup>t</sup> is to say of his euen cristen or hap<sup>3</sup> despit<sup>t</sup> to doon þat<sup>t</sup> him ought<sup>t</sup> to doon [396] ¶ Arragaunt<sup>t</sup> is he þat<sup>t</sup> þinkeþ þat<sup>t</sup> he hath pilke bountees in him þat<sup>t</sup> he hap<sup>3</sup> not<sup>t</sup> or

weneth þat he schulde haue hem by desert/. or  
 elles he demeth þat he is þat he is not. [397] ¶ Im-  
 pudent is he þat for his pride hath no schame of his  
 synne. [398] ¶ Swellyng of hert is whan a man  
 reioysith him of harm þat he hap don [399] ¶ Inso-  
 lent is he þat dispisith in his iuggement alle oþer  
 folk as to regard of his valieu and of his connyng & of  
 his spekyng and of his beryng [400] ¶ Elacioun is whan  
 he may neuer suffre to haue maister ne felawe [401]  
 ¶ Impacient is he: þat wil not ben I-taught ne vnder-  
 nome of his vices and by stryf werrep troupe witynge  
 and defendep his folie [402] ¶ Contimax is he þat  
 þorugh his indignacioun and agains euerych auctorite or  
 power of hem þat been his souerayns [403] ¶ Pre-  
 sumpcioun is whan a man vndertakith and emprisith þat  
 him oughte not to do. or elles þat he may not doo. and þat  
 is cleped surquidrye ¶ Irreuerence is. whan men doon not  
 honour þer as hem ought to doon. and wayteth to be  
 reuerenced [404] ¶ Pertinacie is. whan man defendith  
 his folye and trustep to moche to his owne witte [405]  
 ¶ Vayn glorie is. for to haue pomp and delit in  
 temporal heighnes and glorifie him in worldly  
 estaat [406] ¶ Iangelyng is whan a man spekith to  
 moche biforn folk & clappith as a mille and takeþ no  
 keep what he saip

[407] and 3it is þer a priue spice of pride þat  
 wayteth first/ to be saluet er he saliewe al be he  
 lasse worth þan þat oþer is þar aduenture. and eek  
 wayteþ or desireþ to sitte aboue him or to go aboue him in  
 þe way. or kisse þax. or ben encensed or gon to  
 þe offringe biforn his neighebore [408] and hap such [ . . .

. . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.] a proud desir to be  
 magnified and honoured toforn þe poeple

[409] ¶ now ben tuo maners of pride. þat  
 oon is heighnes wipinne þe hert/ of a man and þat

oper is wipoute. [410] of which soply þese for-  
sayde þinges and mo þan I haue said aperteynen to  
pride þat is in þe hert of a man. and þat oper spices  
of pride ben wipoute [411] ¶ But natheles þat oon  
of þise spices of pride is signe of þat oper. Right  
as gay leuesselle at þe tauerne is signe of wyn  
þat is in þe celer. [412] and þis is in many þinges  
as in speche and countenaunce and in outrageous array of  
cloþing [413] ¶ For certis if þer hadde be no synne  
in cloþing: crist wolde not so soone haue notid and spoke of  
þe cloþing of þilke riche man in þe gospel. [414] And  
saith seint Gregorie þat precious cloþing is cou-  
pable for derthe of it and for his schortnes. and  
for his straungenes and disgisines. and for þe super-  
fluite. or for þe inordinat skantnes of it/ [415]  
Allas many man may sen as in oure dayes þe synful  
costlewe array of cloþing [ . . . . . ]

[416] . . . . .  
. . . no gap] which þat makid is so dere to harm of þe  
poeple. [417] not oonly þe cost of embrowdyng  
þe guyse endentyng of barryng. / Swandyng. palyng.  
or bendyng. and semblable wast of cloþ  
in vanite [418] ¶ But þer is also costlewe furring in  
here gownes so mochil pounsyng of chiseles to make  
holes so moche daggyng of scheris. [419] for with  
þe superfluite in lengþe of the forsaide gownes trayl-  
inge in þe donge and in þe myre on hors and eek on  
foote as wel of man as of womman þat al þilke  
traylyng is verray as in effect/ wasted consumed þred-  
bare and rotyn with donge rapur þan it is zeuen to  
þe pore to gret damage of þe forsaide pore folk.  
[420] and þat in sondry wise. þis is to sain þat þe  
more þat cloþ is wastid þe more most it/ coste to  
þe poeple for þe scarsenes [421] and forþermore  
if it so be þat þay wolde ȝiue suche pounsed and

daggid cloping to þe pore folk. it is not conuenient to were to the pore folk ne suffisaunt to beete here necessite to kepe hem fro þe desperance of þe firmament [422] ¶ vpon þat oper syde to speke of þe horrible disordinat scantnes of cloping. as ben þese cuttid sloppis or Anslets þat purgh her schortnes ne couereth not þe schamful membre of man to wickid entent [423] Alas som men of hem schewen þe schap and þe boce of the horrible swollen membres þat semeth like to þe maledies of hirnia in þe wrapping of here hose / [424] and eek þe buttokes of hem þat faren as it were þe hinder part of a sche ape in þe fulle of þe moone [425] ¶ And more ouer þe wrecchid swollen membres þat þay schewe purgh desgysyng in departyng of here hoses in whyt and reed seemith þat half þe shameful priue membres were flayn. [426] And if it so be þat þay departe here hosen in oper colours. as it whit and bliew. or whit and blak and reed and so forth [427] þanne semith it <sup>1</sup>as by variaunce of colour þat half þe party of his priuy membris ben corrupt by þe fuyr of seint antony or by cancre or by other such meschaunce [428] ¶ And ȝit of þe hynder partye of here buttokes it is ful horrible for to see. For certis in þat partie of here body þer as þay purgen her stynkyng ordure [429] þat foule party schewe þay to þe poeple proudly in despyt of honeste which honeste þat ihū crist and his frendes obserueden to schewen in his lif [430] ¶ Now as of þe outrageous array of wommen. God wot. þat þough þe visage of some of hem seme ful chaste and debonaire ȝit notifie þay in here array of attyre licorousnesse and pride [431] I say not þat honeste in cloping of man or womman is vncouenable ¶ But certis þe superfluite or disordinat skantnes of cloping is repreuable [432] ¶ Also þe synne of here ornament or of apparaile as in þinges þat aperteynen to rydyng as in to many delicat horses þat ben hold-

en for delyt<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> þay ben so faire fat<sup>t</sup> and costlewe [433]  
 and also many a vicious knaue mayntened by  
 cause of<sup>t</sup> hem and in to curious harnoys as in sadelis and  
 bridlis cropours and peytrelle couered with precious  
 cloping<sup>t</sup> and riche barres and plates of gold and of  
 siluer [434] For whiche god saithe by zacharie þe  
 prophete ¶ I wol confounde þe ryders of such horsis  
 [435] ¶ These folk<sup>t</sup> take litil reward of<sup>t</sup> þe ryding<sup>t</sup> of  
 goddes sone of heuen and of his harneys whan he rode  
 vpon an asse. and hadde noon oþer harneys but  
 þe cloping<sup>t</sup> of his disciples newe. ¶ Ne rede I not<sup>t</sup>  
 þat<sup>t</sup> euer he rode on oþer beest<sup>t</sup> [436] ¶ I speke þis  
 for þe synne of superfluite and nouzt<sup>t</sup> for resonable  
 honeste whan resoun it requirith [437] ¶ And forþer ouer  
 certes pride is gretly notified in holdyng<sup>t</sup> of gret<sup>t</sup> meyne  
 whan þay ben of litil profyt<sup>t</sup> or of right<sup>t</sup> no profyt<sup>t</sup>.  
 [438] and namely whan þat<sup>t</sup> meyne is felenous and daun-  
 gerous to þe poeple by hardynesse of lordschipe or by  
 way of offices [439] Fo[r] certes suche lordes selle  
 þanne here lordschipe to þe deuel of helle whan þay  
 susteyne þe wickidnes of here meyne [440] or elles  
 whan þese folk<sup>t</sup> of lowe degre as is þilke þat<sup>t</sup> holden  
 hostilries and susteyne þe þeste of here hostilers  
 and þat is in many maneres of disceytes.  
 [441] þilke maner of folk<sup>t</sup> ben þe flyes þat<sup>t</sup> folwen  
 þe hony or elles þe houndes <sup>1</sup>þat<sup>t</sup> folwen þe carayn.  
 suche forsayde folk / strangelen spirituelly here lordschipes  
 [442] for whiche þus saith dauid þe prophete ¶ wikked  
 deth moot<sup>t</sup> come vpon such lordschipes. & god ȝeue þat<sup>t</sup>  
 þay moot<sup>t</sup> descende in to helle a doun. For in  
 here houses ben iniquites and schrewednesses and not<sup>t</sup> god  
 of heuen. [443] and certes but<sup>t</sup> þay do amende-  
 ment<sup>t</sup>. right<sup>t</sup> so as god ȝaf<sup>t</sup> his benisoun to pharao by þe  
 seruice of Iacob and to balan þe seruice of Ioseph.  
 Right<sup>t</sup> so god wil ȝeue his malisoun to such lordschipes  
 as susteynen þe wikkednes of her seruauntes but<sup>t</sup> þay

come to amendement [444] ¶ Pride of þe table apperith  
ful ofte. for certes riche men ben cleped to feste  
and pore folk ben put away and rebuked [445] ¶ Also  
in excesse of diuers metis and drinkis and namely  
of suche maner of bake metis brennyng of  
wilde fuyr and peynted and castelid wip papire and  
semblable wast. / so þat it is abusiouȝ for to þinke [446]  
and eek in greet preciousnes of vessel & in curiousnesse  
of vessel and of mynstralcy by þe whiche a man is stired þe  
more to delitis of luxurie [447] if so be that þay sette her  
herte þe lasse vpon oure lord ihū crist ¶ Certeyn it is a  
synne. and certainly þe delites mighte be so grete  
in þe caas þat men mighte lightly falle by hem in to  
dedly synne [448] ¶ þe espices þat sourdren of pride  
sopely whan þay sourdren of malice ymagined and auised.  
aforȝ cast or elles of vsage ben dedly synnes it is  
no doute. [449] and whan þay sourden by frelte vn-  
auysed sodeinly and sodeinly wipdrawe agayn al be  
þay greuours synnes I gesse þay ben not  
dedly [450] Now mighte men axe wher-of pride  
sourdeth and springeth ¶ I say som tyme it  
springith of þe goodes of nature / and som tyme of  
þe goodes of [. . . . . no gap]  
grace. [451] certes goodes of nature stonden  
ouȝer in goodes of body or goodes of soule [452]  
¶ Certis þe goodes of body ben hele of body.  
strengþe. deliuerance. beaute. gentrie. fraunchises.  
[453] ¶ Goodes of nature of þe soule. ben goodes with  
scharp vnderstondyng subtil engyn vertu naturel. good  
memorie [454] ¶ Goodes of fortune been riches.  
highe degrees of lordschipes preisyng of þe poeple [455]  
¶ Goodes of grace been science. power to suffre  
spirituel trauaile. benignite. vertuous contemplacioun.  
wipstondyng of temptacioun and semblable þinges.  
[456] of whiche forsayde goodes certe it is a ful gret  
<sup>1</sup>foly a man to pryden him in any of hem alle [457]

¶ Now as for to speke of goodes of nature: god wot þat som tyme we haue hem in nature as moche as to oure damage as to oure profit [458] ¶ As for to speke of hele of body. certes it passith ful lightly. and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of þe siknesse of þe soule [. . . . . no gap in the MS.]

¶ And þerfore þe more þat oure body is hool þe more be we in peril to falle [459] ¶ Eke for to pride him in his strengþe of body it is a foly. for certes þe fleisch coueytith again þe spirit. and ay þe more strong þat þe fleisch is þe sorier may þe soule be / [460] and ouer al þis strengþe of body and worldly hardynes causeþ ful ofte many man to peril and meschaunce [461] Eek for to pride him of his gentrie is ful gret folye: For often tyme þe gentrie of þe body bynymeth þe gentery of þe soule ¶ And we ben alle of oon fader and of oon moder & alle we ben of oon nature roten and corrupt riche and pore [462] ¶ For soþe oon maner gentry is for to prayse þat apparailleþ mannes corrage with vertues and moralitees and makith him cristes child [463] ¶ For trustiþ wel ouer what man þat synne haþ maistry: he is verray cherl to synne

[464] ¶ Now ben þer general synnes of gentilesce as schewyng of vice & rybaudrie and seruage of synne. in word in werk and contenaunce [465] ¶ And vsinge vertu curtesie and clenness / and to be liberal þat is to sayn large by mesure. for þilke þat passith mesure is foly and synne [466] ¶ And anoþer is to remembre him of bounte þat he of oþer folk haþ resceyued [467] ¶ Another is to be benigne to his goode subiectis ¶ wherfore as saip senek. ¶ Ther is no þing more couenable to a man of heigh estate þan debonairte and pite [468] ¶ And þerfore þise flies þat men clepen bees whan þay make here king: þay chesen oon þat haþ no pricke wher wiþ he may styng [469]

¶ Anoper is. a man to haue a noble herte & a diligent  
 to atteigne to hihe vertuous þinges [470] ¶ Certis  
 also who þat prideth him in þe deedes of grace: is eek an  
 outrageous fool ¶ For þilke ȝiftes of grace þat schulde  
 haue I-torned him to goodnes and medicyne: torneth  
 him to venym and to confusioun as saip seint gregory  
 [471] ¶ Certis also. who-so pridith him in þe goodes of  
 fortune. he is a ful gret fool ¶ For som tyme is a man a  
 gret lord by þe morwe þat is a caytif and a wrecche  
 er it be night. / [472] ¶ And som tyme þe riches of a man is  
 cause of his deth. / <sup>1</sup>¶ Som tyme þe delice is  
 cause of his greuous maledye þurgh which he deieth  
 [473] ¶ Certis þe commendacioun of þe poeple is som-  
 tyme ful fals and ful brutal for to truste. þis day þay  
 prayse: to morwe þay blame [474] ¶ God woot desir to  
 haue commendacioun of þe poeple hap causid deth of  
 many a busy man [475] ¶ Now sith so is. þat ȝe han herd and  
 vnderstonde what is pride. And whiche ben þe spices of  
 it / and whens pride sourdeth and springeþ:

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[476] Now schul ȝe vnderstonde. which is þe remedy  
 agayns pride ¶ And þat is humilite or  
 meekenes [477] þat is a vertue þurgh which a man  
 hap verray knowleche of himself and holdith of him-  
 self no pride ne pris ne deynte as in regard of his desertes  
 considering euermore his frelte. [478] ¶ Now ben þer þre  
 maners of humilite. As humilite in hert/ anoper is  
 humilite in his mouth. þe þridde in his workes //  
 [479] ¶ þe humilite in his herte. is in foure maners: þat  
 oon is whan a man holdith him self not worth  
 biforn god of heuen. anoper is whan he despiseþ



no man [480] ¶ The prid is. whan he ne rekkip nought pough a man holde him nouȝt worth ¶ The ferpe is whan he holdeþ him nought sory of his humiliacioun [481] ¶ Also þe humilite of mouth is in foure þinges. In attempre speche. and in humbles of speche. and he byknowith wip his owne mouth þat he is such as him þenkith þat he is in herte. Anoper is whan he praisith þe bounte of anoper man and no þing þerof amenusith [482] ¶ Humilite eek in werk is in foure maneres ¶ The first is whan he puttith oper men toforn him ¶ þe secounde is to chese þe lewedest place ouer al ¶ þe prid is gladly to assente to good counseil [483] ¶ þe ferpe is gladly to stonde to thaward of his souereyns or of him þat is in heigher degre. certeyn þis is a gret werk of humilite

[No break in the MS.]

[484] ¶ De Inuidia. [in margin]

**A**fter pride now wol I speke of þe foule synne of Envy which þat is as by þe word of þe philosophre. sorwe of other mennes prosperite ¶ And after þe word of seint austyn. is it sorwe of oper mennes wele & ioye of oper mennes harm [485] ¶ This foule synne is platly agayns þe holy gost. al be it so þat euery synne is agayn the holy gost: ȝit natheles for as moche as bounte aperteyneth proprely to þe holy gost. and enuye proprely is malice: þerfore is it proprely agayns þe bounte of þe holy gost [486] ¶ Now haþ malice <sup>1</sup>tuo spices. þat is to sayn hardnes of hert in wickednes or ellis þe fleisch of man is blynd þat he considereth not þat he is in synne [. . . . . no gap] which is þe hardnes of the deuyl [487] ¶ That oper spice of enuye is. whan a man warieth troupe and wot þat it is troupe. and eek whan he warieth þe grace þat god haþ ȝeue to his

neighebor and al . þis is by enuye [488] ¶ Certes þan is enuye þe worste synne þat is ¶ For sothely alle oþer synnes ben somtyme oonly agains oon special vertu [489] ¶ But certes enuye is agayns alle vertues and agayns al goodnes. for it is sory of alle þe bountees of his neighebor ¶ And in þis maner it is diuers from alle þe synnes. [490] ¶ For wel vnneþe is þer any synne þat he ne hath som delit in himself sauþ oonly enuye þat euer hath in it self anguisch and sorwe [491] ¶ The spices of enuye ben þese ¶ Ther is first sorwe of oþer mennes goodnes and of her prosperite. and prosperite is kyndely matier of ioye. þanne is enuye a synne agayns kynde [492] ¶ The secounde spice of enuye. is ioye of oþer mennes harm. and þat is proprely lik to the deuyl þat euer reioyeth him of mennes harm [493] ¶ Of þese tuo spices cometh bacbityng. and þis synne of bakbytyng or detraccioun hath certein spices as þus ¶ Som man praiseth his neighebor by a wickid entent. [494] For he makith alway a wickid knotte atte last ende. alway he makith a but. at þe last ende þat is þing of more blame þan worth is al þe praysing [495] ¶ The secounde spice is þat if a man be good and doth or saith a þing to good entent. þe bakbiter wol torne al þilke goodnes vpsodown to his schrewed entent. [496] þe þridde is to amenuse þe bounte of his neighebor. [497] þe ferþe spiece of bakbytyng is þis. þat if men speke goodnes of a man. þan wil þe bakbiter seyn. þar fay ȝit such a man is bet þan he in dispraysynge of him þat men praise. [498] þe fifte spice is þis for to consente gladly and herken gladly to þe harm þat men speke of oþer folk. þis synne is ful gret and ay encresith after thentent of þe bakbiter [499] ¶ After bakbytyng cometh grucching or murmuracioun. And som tyme it springith of Insapiens agayns god. and somtyme agains man.

[500] agayns god is it. whan a man grucchith agayn  
 pyne of helle or agayns pouerte. or of losse of catel.  
 or agayn reyn or tempest<sup>1</sup> or elles grucchiþ þat schrewes  
 han prosperite or ellis þat goode men han ad-  
 uersite. [501] and alle þese þinges schulde men suffre  
 paciently. for þay come by rightful iuggement and  
 ordinaunce of god [502] ¶ Som tyme cometh grucching of  
 auarice as Iudas grucched azens þe Maudeleyn whan  
 sche anoynted þe hed of oure lord ihū crist with hir  
 precious oynement. [503] þis maner murmur is swich  
 as man grucchith of goodnes þat himself  
 doþ or þat oþer folk doon of here owne catel [504]  
 ¶ Som tyme cometh murmur of pride. as whan Symon  
 þe pharise grucchid agayn þe maudeleyn whan  
 sche approchid to ihū crist and wepte at his feet for hir  
 synnes. [505] And somtyme it sourdith of  
 enuye whan men discoueren a mannes harm þat was  
 priue or bereþ him on hond þing þat is fals [506]  
 ¶ Murmuryng eek is ofte among seruauþt þat grucchen  
 whan here souerayns bidden hem to doon leeful þinges.  
 [507] and for as moche as þay dar nouþt openly wipstonde  
 the comaundementz of here souerayns: 3it wol thay sayn  
 harm and grucche and murmure priuely for verray  
 despit / [508] whiche wordes men clepe þe deuclis  
 pater noster. þough so be þat þe deucl hadde  
 neuer pater noster but þat lewed men calle it so  
 [509] ¶ Som tyme it cometh of Ire of  
 priue hate þat norischeth rancour in herte as  
 I schal declare. [510] þanne cometh eek bitternes of  
 herte. þorugh which bitternesse euery good deede of his  
 neighebores semeth to him bitter and vnsauery [511]  
 ¶ But þanne cometh discord þat vnbyndeth alle maner  
 of frendschipe. þanne cometh scornynge. of [. . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap] his neighe-  
 bor al do he neuer so wel. [512] þanne cometh  
 accusyng. as whan man seketh occasioun to annoyen his

**[No break in the MS.]**

**N**ow wol I speke of þe remedies agayns þise foule  
þinges and þis foule synne of enuye ¶ First is þe loue  
of god principal and louynge of his neighebor as himself.  
¶ Sopely þat oon ne may nought ben wipoute þat  
oper [516] ¶ And truste wel þat in þe name of þy  
neighebour þou 'schalt vnderstonde þe name of þy  
broþer. For alle we haue oon fader fleisschly and oon  
mooder þat is to sain adam and eua and eek' oon fader  
spirituel & þat is god of heuen. [517] þy  
neghebor artow holden for to loue. [ . . . . .

. . *no gap*] þat' is to sayn boþe to sauacioun of lif' and of soule [518] and more ouer. þou schalt' loue hym in word and in benigne amonestyng' and chastising' & conforte him in his annoyas and praye for him with al þin herte [519] ¶ & in dede þou schalt' loue him in such wise þat' þou schalt' do to him charite as þou woldist' it were doon to þin oughne persone [520] and þerfore þou schalt' doon him noon harme in wikked word ne damage him in his body ne in his catel ne in his soule by wicked entising' of ensample [521] ¶ þou schalt' nouȝt' desiren his wif/ ne noone of his þinges ¶ vnderstonde eek' þat' in the name of þy neighebor is comprehendid his enemy [522] ¶ Certes man schal loue his enemy by þe comaundement' of god. and soþly þy frend schalt' þou loue in god [523] ¶ I sayde þin enemy schaltow loue for goddes sake by his comaunde-

ment<sup>r</sup> for if it were resoun that man schulde hate his enemy For-soþe god nolde nouȝt receyue vs to his loue þat ben his enemys [524] ¶ Agains þre maner of wronges þat his enemy doþ to him he schal do þre þinges as þus. [525] agayns hate and rancour of herte he schal loue him in herte. Agayns chydyng<sup>r</sup> and wicked wordes he schal pray for his enemye. agains wikked dede of his enemy he schal doon him bounte [526] ¶ For crist<sup>r</sup> saith loueþ ȝoure enemyes and prayeþ for hem þat ȝow chacen and pursewen. and doþ bounte to hem þat ȝow haten. [ . . . . . no gap.] [527] For sothely nature driueþ vs to loue oure frendes / and þar fay oure enemyes han more neede to loue þan oure frendes ¶ For sothely to hem þat more neede haue certis to hem schul men do goodnes. [528] And certis in þilke dede haue we by remembrance of þe loue of ihū crist<sup>r</sup> þat dyed for his enemys [529] ¶ And in als moche as þilke loue is more greuouse to parforme: so moche is þe more gret<sup>r</sup> remedye & meryt<sup>r</sup> ¶ And þerfore þe louyng<sup>r</sup> of oure enemy haþ confoundid the venym of þe deuel. [530] For right<sup>r</sup> as þe deuel is confoundid by humilite: Right<sup>r</sup> so is he woundid to þe deþ by loue of oure enemy [531] ¶ Certes þanne is loue þe medicine þat castith out þe venym of enuye fro mannes hert<sup>r</sup>. [532] the spices of þis part<sup>r</sup><sup>1</sup> schuln be more largely declared in here chapitres folwyng

[No break in the MS.]

¶ De Ira. [from the margin]

[533]

**A**fter enuye wol I descryuen þe synne of Ire. For soþely who so haþ enuye vpon his neighebor: anoon he wol comunly fynde him a matiere of wrappe in word or in dede agayns him to whom he haþ envie. [534] and as wel comeþ Ire of pride

as of enuye ¶ For soply he þat is proud or enuyous is lightly wroth.

[535] þis synne of Ire after þe descryuyng of seint austyn is wikked wille to ben auengid by word or by dede [536] ¶ Ire afte þe philosofer is þe feruent blood of man I-quiaked in his hert þurgh which he wolde harm to him þat him hatip [537] ¶ For certes þe hert of man by eschawfyng and mornyng of his blood waxith so trouble / þat he is out of alle Iuggements of resoun [538] ¶ But 3e schal vnderstonde þat ire is in tuo maneres. þat oon of hem is good. þat oþer is wikke [539] ¶ The good Ire is by ialousy of goodnesse þurgh which a man is wroþ wip wikkidnes. and [. . . . . no gap] þefore saith a wise man þat ire is bet þan play. [540] This Ire is with deboneirete. and it is wroþ wipoute bitternes. not wroth with þe man: but wroþ wip þe mys dedes of þe man as saip þe prophet dauid ¶ Irascimini & nolite peccare. &c [541] ¶ Now vnderstonde þat wikked Ire is in tuo maneres þat is to sayn sodeyn Ire or hastif Ire wipoute auysement and consenting of resoun. [542] the menyng and þe sentence of þis is þat þe resoun of a man ne consentith not to þilke sodein Ire. And þanne is it venial [543] ¶ anoper Ire is ful wicked þat comep of felony of herte auysed & cast biforn with wickid wille to do vengeaunce and þerto his resoun consentith. and sothely þis is deedly synne. [544] þis ire is so displeaunt to god þat it troublith his hous and chaceth þe holy gost out of mannes soule and wastith and destroyeth þe liknes of god. þat is to say þe vertu þat is in mannes soule [545] and put in him þe liknes of þe deuel and bynymeth þe man fro god þat is his rightful lord [546] ¶ This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to þe deuel. for it is þe deueles fornays þat is eschaufid wip þe fuyr of helle [547] ¶ For certes

right so as fuyr is more mighty to destroye erpely  
 þinges þan eny oþer element: Right so Ire is mighty to  
 destroye alle spirituel þinges [548] ¶ loke how þat  
 fuyr of smale gledis þat ben almost dede vnder asshen  
 wolden quiken agayn whan þay ben touched [. . . . .

. . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] <sup>1</sup>by pride þat is couered in  
 mannes herte [549] ¶ For certes fuyr may nouȝt come  
 out of no þing [. . . . . *no gap*]  
 naturelly as fuyr is drawe out of flintes with steel  
 [550] ¶ Right so as pride is often tyme mater of Ire:  
 Right so is Rancour norice and keper of Ire [551] ¶ Ther is  
 a maner tree as saip seint Isydre . þat whan men  
 maken fuyr of þilke tree and couer þe colis wip  
 asshen: soþly þe fuyr of it wol lasten al a ȝer or more.  
 [552] And right so fareþ it of rancour whan it oones is  
 conceyued in þe hertis of som men: certein it wol  
 lasten fro oon estren day vntil anoper  
 ester day and more. [553] but certis þilke man  
 is ful fer fro þe mercy of god al þilke while

[554] ¶ In þis forsaide deueles fornays þer  
 forgen þre schrewes. pride þat/ ay blowith & encresith  
 þe fuyr by chidyng and wickid wordis [555] ¶ þanne  
 stont enuye and blowith þe hote Iren vpon þe hert/  
 of man wip a paire of longe tonges of rancour  
 [556] and þanne þe sinne of contumelie or  
 strif and cheste and baterith and forgeth by vileyns  
 repreuynges [557] ¶ Certes þis cursed synne annoyeth  
 boþe to þe man himsilf and eek to his neighebor  
 ¶ For soþely almost al þe harm þat eny man  
 doth to his neighebour comeþ þurgh wrappe [558] ¶ For  
 certis outrageous wrappe doþ al þat euer þe  
 deuyl him comaundeth. For he ne spareþ neyþer  
 crist ne his moodir. [559] and in his out-  
 rage anger and Ire. allas ful many oon  
 at þat tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly

bope of crist and eek of alle his halwes. [560] Is  
 nat þis a cursed vice? yis certis. it bynymeth  
 fro man his witte and his resoun and al his deboneire  
 lyf spirituel þat scholde kepen his soule [561]  
 ¶ Certes it bynymeth eek goddis dewe lordschipe and  
 þat is mannes soule. and þe loue of his neighebor.  
 hit stryueþ eek alday agayns troupe ¶ It reueth him eek þe  
 quiete of his hert and subuertith his herte and his soule

[562] ¶ Of ire comeþ þese stynkyng engendrures  
 ¶ First hate þat is old wrappe discord þurgh which  
 a man forsakip his olde frend þat he hap loued ful  
 longe. [563] and þanne comeþ warre and euery  
 maner of wronge þat man doth to his neighebor in  
 body or catel [564] ¶ Of þis cursed synne of Ire  
 comeþ eek manslaughter. And vnderstonde wel þat  
 homicidie þat is man-slaughter is in diuers wise. ¶ Som  
 maner of homicidie is spirituel and som is bodily. [565]  
<sup>1</sup> Spirituel manslaughter is in sixe þinges ¶ First by  
 hate as saith seint Iohan ¶ he þat hateþ his broþer  
 is an homicide. [566] homicide is eek by bak-bytyng of  
 whiche bakbiters saith Salamon þat þay haue twaye  
 swerdes with whiche þay slen here neighebers. For  
 soþely as wikke is to bynyme his good name as  
 his lif. [567] homicidy is eek in ȝeuyng of wikkid  
 counseil by fraude as for to ȝeue counseil to areyse  
 wicked and wrongful custumes and taliages [568] of whiche  
 saip Salomon ¶ leoun roryng and bere hungry ben like to þe  
 cruel lordschipes in wiþholdyng or abbrigging of þe  
 schipe or the hyre or þe wages of seruauntes or ellis in  
 vsure or in withdrawyng of almes of pore folk  
 [569] For whiche þe pore man saith ¶ Feedith him þat  
 almost dyeth for hunger. for soþely but if þou feede him?  
 þou slest him and eek þese ben dedly synnes. [570]  
 bodily manslaughter is. whan þou sleest him wip þy  
 tonge in oper manere as whan þou comaundist to  
 slen a man or elles ȝiuest counseil to slee a



man [571] ¶ Manslauȝter in dede is in foure maneres  
 ¶ That oon is by lawe. Right as a Iustice dampnith  
 him þat is coupable to þe deth. But let þe Iustice  
 be war þat he do it rightfully and þat he do it nought  
 for delit to spille blood: but for keping of rightwis-  
 nes [572] ¶ Anoper homicidy is doon for  
 necessite. as whan a man slep anoper him defendaunt.  
 and þat he may noon oper wise eschape fro his  
 deth. [573] but certeynly if he may escape wip-  
 oute slaughter of his aduersarie and sleth him  
 he doth synne and he schal bere penaunce as for dedly  
 synne. [574] ¶ Ek if a man by caas or aduenture schete  
 an arwe or cast a stoon wip which he slep a man:  
 he is an homicide. [575] Eke if a womman by negligence  
 ouerlye hir child in hir sleping it is homicide and  
 deedly synne [576] ¶ Eke whan man distourbith con-  
 cepcioun of a child and makith a womman ouper bareyn  
 by drinke of venenous herbis þurgh whiche sche may  
 nouȝt conceyue or sleth a child by drynkes. or  
 elles putteþ certeyn material þinges in secre  
 place to slee þe child. [577] or elles dop vnkyndely  
 synne by which man or womman schedith here nature  
 in ma[n] or in place þer as þe child may nought be con-  
 ceuyed. or ellis if a womma[n] haue conceyued and hurt  
 herself and sleth þe child ȝit is it homycidie  
 [578] ¶ What say we eek of wommen þat morden  
 here children for drede of worldly schame. Certes an  
 horrible homicidy. [579] homicidy is eek if a man ap-  
 proche to a womman by desir of lecchery þurgh þe which þe  
 child is perischt or elles smitith a womman wytyngly  
 þurgh which sche sleeth hir child. alle þese ben homi-  
 cides [. . . . . no gap] [580] ¶ ȝit cometh þer of  
 Ire many mo synnes as wel in word as in werk &  
 þought. As he þat arettith vpon god and blamith god  
 of þing of which he is himself gulty or despisith  
 god and alle his halwes as doon þese cursed hasardours

in diuers cuntrees. [581] þis cursed synne don þay  
whan þay felen in here herte ful wickidly of god and  
his halwes [582] ¶ also whan þay treten vnreuerently  
þe sacrament of þe auter. þilke synne is so gret  
þat vnneþe may it be relested but þat þe mercy of  
god passith alle his werkes. and is so gret and so  
benigne [583] ¶ Thanne cometh of Ire attray anger  
whan a man is scharpely amonested in his schrifte to for-  
lete synne: [584] þanne wol he be angry and  
answere hokerly and angrily and defenden or excusen  
his synne by vnstedfastnesse of his fleisch. or elles he  
dede it to holde companye with his felawes. or  
ellis he saith þe fend entised him. [585] or elles he  
dide it for his 3outhe. or ellis his complexioun is so  
corrageous þat he may not forbere. or ellis it is  
desteny. as he saith. [. . . . .  
. . . *no gap*] it cometh him of gentilesce of his auncetrie  
and semblable þinges [586] ¶ Alle þese maner of folk  
so wrappen hem in here synnes þat þay wol nouȝt  
deliuer hemself ¶ For soþely no wight þat excuseth  
him wilfully of his synne may nouȝt / be deliuered of his  
synne til þat he mekely biknoweth his synne. [587]  
¶ After þis þanne [. . . . . *no gap*] þat is expres  
agayns þe comaundementz of god & þis bifallith often  
of angir and of Ire [588] ¶ God saith. þou schalt not  
take þe name of þy lord god in vayn or in ydil. ¶ Also  
oure lord ihū crist saith by þe word of seint. *Mathew*  
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [589] ¶ Ne wol ȝe  
not swere in alle manere. neither by  
heuen for it is goddes trone. ne by þe eorþe for it is þe  
benche of his feet. ne by ierusalem: for it is þe cite of  
a gret king. ne by þin heed: þou may nouȝt  
make an her whit ne blak. [590] but sayeth by ȝoure  
word ȝe. ȝe. and nay. nay. and what it is more: it / is  
of euel. þus saith ihū crist [591] ¶ For cristes sake swereth  
not so synfully in dismembring of crist. for cristes sake. bi

soule. <sup>1</sup>herte. boones and body. For certes it semep þat 3e þenke þat cursed Iewes ne dismembrit nought ynough þe precious persone of crist. but 3e dismembre him more. [592] and if so be þat þe lawe compelle 3ow to swere. þanne reule 3ow after þe lawe of god in 3oure swering as saip. *Ieremie capitulo .iiij<sup>to</sup>* [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ Thou schalt kepe þre condicions. þou schalt swere in troupe in doom and in rightwisnes [593] þis is to sayn. þou schalt swere soth. For euery lesyng is agayns crist. for crist is verray troupe and þink wel þis þat euery gret swerer not compellid lawfully to swere þe wonder schal not departe fro his hous whil he vseth such vnleful sweringe [594] ¶ þou schalt eek swere in doom whan þou art constreigned by þy domesman to witnesse þe troupe. [595] eek þou schalt not swere for enuye ne for fauour ne for meede but / for rightwisnesse for declaring of it to worschip of god and helping of þin euen-cristen [596] and þerfore euery man þat takip goddes name in ydil or falsly swerip with his mouth or elles takip on him þe name of crist and callith himself a cristen man and lyueth agayn cristes lyuyng and his teching alle þay take cristes name in ydel [597] ¶ loke eek what saith seint peter *Actuum* ca°. .iiij<sup>to</sup> ¶ Non est aliud nomen sub celo &c ¶ Ther is noon oper name saith seint peter vnder heuen ne 3euen to noon men in which þay mowe be saued þat is to sayn but in þe name of ihū crist [598] ¶ Tak heede eek how þe precious name of crist as saith seint poule ad philippenses .ij°. In nomine ihū &c ¶ That in þe name of ihū euery kne of heuenly creatures or erpely or of helle schulde bowe and [ . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] tremble to heeren it nempned. [599] ¶ Thanne semep it þat men þat sweren so horribly by his

blessed name þat þay despise it more bodyly  
þan dede þe cursed Iewes or elles þe deuel þat  
tremblith whan he heerith his name

[600] ¶ Now certis sith þat swering but it be  
lawfully doon is so heihly defendid: moche wors is  
forswering falsly and ȝit needeles

[601] what say we eek of hem þat deliten hem  
in swering and holden it a gentery or manly dede / to  
swere grete othis. and what of hem þat of verray  
vsage / ne cessen nouȝt to swere grete opis al be not þe cause  
worþ a strawe: certes þis is horrible synne [602]  
¶ Sweryng sodeynly wipout auysement is eek a  
synne [603] ¶ But let vs now go to þilke horrible sweryng  
of adiuracioun and coniuraciouns as <sup>1</sup>doon þese false en-  
chauntours or nigromanciens in bacines ful or  
in a bright sword in a churche or in a fuyr or in þe schulder  
bon of a scheep [604] ¶ I can not sayn but þat þay  
doon cursedly and dampnably agains þe  
faith of holy chirche

[605] what say we of hem þat bilieuen on  
diuinailes as by flight or by nois of briddes or of  
bestes or by sort by geomancie. by dremes. by chirkyng  
of dores or crakking of howses. by gnawying of rattis  
and such maner wrecchidnes [606] ¶ Certes al þis  
þing is defended by god and holy chirche for  
whiche þay ben accursed til þay come to amendement  
þat on such filthe bisetten here bileeue. [607] Charmes  
for woundes or malady of men or of bestes if þay  
take eny effect. it may be paraduventure þat god suffreþ  
hit for folk schulde ȝeue þe more faip and reuerence to  
his name

[608] ¶ Now wol I speke of lesynge whiche gener-  
ally is fals signifiante of word in entent to desceyuen  
his euencristen [609]. Som lesyng is of whiche  
þer cometh noon auantage to noon wight and som lesyng  
torneþ to þe ease or profit of som man.

and to damage of an oþer man [610] ¶ An oþer lesyng<sup>t</sup> for to saue his lif<sup>t</sup> or his catel [. . . . . *no gap*] cometh of delit<sup>t</sup>/ for to lye. in which delit<sup>t</sup> þay wol forge a long<sup>t</sup> tale and paynte it with alle circumstaunces wher as þe ground of þe tale is fals [611] ¶ Som lesyng<sup>t</sup> cometh. For he wolde susteyne his word ¶ Som lesyng<sup>t</sup> cometh of rechelesnes wipoute auisement<sup>t</sup> and semblable þinges

[612] ¶ lat<sup>t</sup> vs now touche þe vice of flaterie which cometh not<sup>t</sup> gladly but for drede or for coueitise [613] ¶ Flaterie is generally wrongful preysing<sup>t</sup>. Flaterers ben þe deueles norices þat<sup>t</sup> norisshen his children wip mylk<sup>t</sup> of þe losingerie. [614] forsoþe Salamon saith þat<sup>t</sup> flaterie is worse þan detraccioun. for som tyme detraccioun makith an hawteyn man be þe more humble for he dredith detraccioun ¶ But certes flaterie makith a man to enhaunsen his hert<sup>t</sup>/ and his countenaunce [615] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles enchauntours. For þay maken man to wene of himself<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he is like to þat<sup>t</sup> he is nouȝt<sup>t</sup> like. [616] þay ben like Iudas þat<sup>t</sup> bitraised [. . . . . *no gap*] to selle him to his enemy þat<sup>t</sup> is þe deuel [617] ¶ Flaterers ben þe deueles chapeleyns þat<sup>t</sup> singen ay. placebo. [618] I rekene flaterers in þe vices of Ire. For ofte tyme if<sup>t</sup> oon man be wroþ wip an oþer. þanne wol he flatere som man to mayntene him in his querel

[619] Speke we now of such cursyng<sup>t</sup> as cometh of Irous hert<sup>t</sup> malisoun generally may be said euery maner power of harm. such <sup>1</sup>cursyng<sup>t</sup> bireueþ man fro þe regne of god as saip seint<sup>t</sup> poule [620] ¶ And ofte tyme such cursyng<sup>t</sup> wrongfully retourneth agayn to hym þat<sup>t</sup> curseth as þat<sup>t</sup> retourneth agayn to his owne nest<sup>t</sup>. [621] and ouer alle þinges men oughten eschewe to cursen here oughne children and ȝiue to þe deuel here engendrure as ferforth as in hem is Certis it is gret<sup>t</sup> peril and gret<sup>t</sup> synne

[622] ¶ let vs þanne speke of chydyng and reproche  
whiche þat ben ful grete woundes in mannes hert [. . .

. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[623] ¶ For certis vnneþe may a man plainly ben  
accordid with him þat him openly reuyled and  
reproved and disclaundrid. þis is a ful grisly synne  
as crist saith in þe gospel. [624] and takith keep now  
þat he þat reproueþ his neighbor. ouþer he reproueþ  
him by som harm of peyne. [ . . . . .

. . . . .  
[625]. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

þanne tornith þe reproef to ihū crist. For peyne is  
sent by þe rightwis sonde of god and by his suffraunce  
be it meselrie or many oþer maladies. [626] and if he  
repreue him vncharitably as þou holour þou dronk-  
elewe harlot and so forth þanne aperteyneth þat  
to þe reioysing of þe deuel þat euer haþ ioye  
þat men doon synne. [627] And certis chidyng may  
nought come but out of a vileins herte ¶ For after þe  
abundaunce of þe herte spekep þe mouth ful ofte.  
[628] and ȝe schal vnderstonde þat loke by any way  
whan any man schal chastise anoper þat he be war  
fro chyding or repreuyng. For trewely but he be  
war he may ful lightly quiken þe fuyr of anger and of  
wrappe which þat he schulde quenchen: and par auenture  
slep þat he mighte chaste with benignite.  
[629] for as saip salamon ¶ The amiable tonge is  
þe tree of lif þat is to sayn of lif espirituel. and  
sopely dislaue tonge slep þe spirit of him [. . .

. . . . . *no gap*] þat is reproued [630] ¶ lo

what saith seint augustyn ¶ Ther is no þing so lik þe  
fendes child as he þat ofte chideþ ¶ Seint poule seiþ  
eek I seruaunt of god bihoueth nouȝt to chide. [631] and  
þough þat chidyng be a vileins þing bitwixe alle  
maner folk/ ȝit is it certes more vncouenable  
bitwix a man and his wif. For þer is neuer rest

And þerfore saith Salamon, ¶ An hous þat is vncouered  
 & droppynge and a chidyng wyf ben like  
 [632] a man þat is in dropping hous in many  
 partes þough he eschewe þe dropping in oon place:  
 it droppeþ on him in anoper place ¶ So farith it by  
 a chydinge wyf: But sche chide him in oon place: sche  
 wol chide him in anoper [633] ¶ And þerfore better is  
 a morsel of bred with ioye þan an hous ful of  
 delices with chydinge seip Salamon [634] <sup>1</sup>¶ Seint  
 poul saith ¶ O ze wommen be ze sugettis to zoure  
 housbondes as bihouep in god. And ze men loueth zoure  
 wyues ad Colocenses iij<sup>o</sup>.

[635] ¶ Afterward speke we of scornynge which is a  
 wikked þing and sinful and namely whan he scornith a man  
 for his goode workes [636] ¶ For certes suche scornes  
 faren lik þe foule toode þat may nought endure þe  
 soote smel of þe vine roote whan it  
 florischith. [637] þese scorners ben partyng felawes  
 wip þe deuel. For þay han ioye whan þe deuel  
 wynneth and sorwe whan he leseth  
 [638] ¶ Thay ben aduersaries of Ihū crist. for  
 þay haten þat he loueth þat is to saye sauacioun of soule

[639] Speke we now of wikked counseil ¶ For he þat  
 wikkid counseil ȝiueth. he is a traytour. for he deceyueþ  
 him þat trusteþ in him ¶ vt achitofel ad absolonem  
 ¶ But napeles ȝet is his wikkid counseil first aȝens him-  
 self [640] ¶ For as saith the wise man ¶ Euery fals  
 lyuyng hap þis proprete in him self. þat he þat  
 wil annoye anoper man: he annoyeth first himself.  
 [641] ¶ and men schul vnderstonde þat men schulde nought  
 take his counseil of fals folk ne of angry folk/ [. . .  
 . . . .] ne of folk þat louen specially to moche her  
 oughne profyt ne in to moche worldly. folk. namely in coun-  
 selyng of soules

[642] Now comeþ þe synne of hem þat sownen and  
 maken discord amonges folk which is a synne þat/

crist<sup>t</sup> hateþ outrely. and no wonder is. for god died  
for to make concord. [643] and more schame do þay to  
crist<sup>t</sup> þan dede þay þat<sup>t</sup> him crucifiede ¶ For god  
loueth bettre þat<sup>t</sup> frendschipe be amonges folk<sup>t</sup> ¶ þanne  
he dide his owne body which þat/ he ȝaf<sup>t</sup> for vnite.  
þerfore ben þay likned to þe deuel þat<sup>t</sup> euer ben  
aboute to make discord

[644] ¶ Now comith þe sinne of double tonge. suche  
as speken faire biforn folk<sup>t</sup> and wikkedly bihynde or  
elles þay make semblaunt as þough þay speke of  
good entencioun or ellis in game & play and ȝit<sup>t</sup> þay  
speke in wikked entent<sup>t</sup>

[645] ¶ Now comeþ þe wreying<sup>t</sup> of counseil þurgh  
which a man is famed ¶ Certes vnnethe may he restore þat<sup>t</sup>  
damage

[646] ¶ Now comeþ manace þat<sup>t</sup> is an open foly. For  
he þat<sup>t</sup> ofte man[a]ceth he threttith more þan he may  
parfourme ful ofte tyme

[647] ¶ Now comeþ Idel wordes þat<sup>t</sup> is wiþoute  
profyt<sup>t</sup> of him þat<sup>t</sup> spekith þo wordes and eek<sup>t</sup> of him  
þat<sup>t</sup> herkenep þo wordes. or elles ydel wordes ben  
þo þat<sup>t</sup> ben needeles or wiþouten entent<sup>t</sup> of naturel  
profyt<sup>t</sup> [648] and al be it<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> ydil wordes ben som  
tyme venial synne: ȝit<sup>t</sup> schulde men doute hem. For we  
schuln ȝiue rekenynge of hem bifore <sup>1</sup>god

[649] ¶ Now comith iangeling<sup>t</sup> þat/ may nouȝt<sup>t</sup> be wiþ-  
oute synne as saith Salamon ¶ It<sup>t</sup> is a signe of apert<sup>t</sup>  
folie [650] and þerfore a philosophre whan  
men askid him how men schulde plesse þe poeple  
and he answerde ¶ Do many goode werkes. and spek/ fewe  
iangeles

[651] ¶ After þis comeþ þe synne of iapers þat<sup>t</sup>  
ben þe deueles apes For þay maken folk<sup>t</sup> to laughen at  
here iapes or iaperie as folk<sup>t</sup> doon at/ þe gaudes of an ape /  
Suche iapes defendith seint<sup>t</sup> poule [652] ¶ Loke how  
þat<sup>t</sup> vertuous and holy wordes conforten hem



þat' trauailen in þe seruice of crist': Right' so conforten  
þe violent' wordes and knakkis and iaperies hem þat'  
trauayle in þe seruice of þe deuyt [653] ¶ These ben  
þe synnes þat/ comen of [ . . . . . no gap] Ire  
and of oþer synnes

[*No break in the MS.*]

[654] ¶ *Remedium contra Iram*

**R**emedye agayns ire is a vertue þat' men  
clepe mansuetude. þat' is deboneirte. And  
eek' anoper vertue þat' men clepe pacience or  
sufferaunce.

[655] debonairete wipdrawith and restreignen  
þe stiringes and þe moeuynges of mannys corrage in his  
herte in such manere þat' þai ne skip not' out' by  
anger ne by Ire [656] ¶ Suffraunce suffrith swetely al  
þe annoyaunce and þe wronges þat' men doon to man  
outward [657] ¶ Seint Ierom saip þus of debonairete.  
þat it doþ noon harm to no wight' ne saith ne for noon  
harm þat' men doon ne sayn. he ne eschaufith nought'  
agayns his resoun [658] ¶ This vertu comiþ som tyme of  
nature ¶ For as saith þe philosopher man is a quik'  
þing' by nature and trefable to goodnesse  
¶ But' whan debonairete is enformed of grace: þan is  
it' þe more worþ

[659] ¶ Pacience þat' is anoper remedie. agains Ire  
is a vertu þat' suffreth swetely euery mannes goodnes  
as is not' wroþ for noon harm þat' is doon to him.  
[660] þe philosopher saith þat' pacience is þilke  
vertue þat' suffrith deboneirly alle þe outrages of  
aduersite and euery wickid word [661] ¶ This vertue  
makip a man lik' to god and makith him goddes  
oughne dere child as saip crist ¶ þis vertu destroyen  
þin enemy and þerfore saith þe wise man ¶ If þou  
wolt' venquisch þin enemy lerne to suffre [662] ¶ And  
þou schalt' vnderstonde þat' man suffrith foure maners

of greuaunces in outward þinges. agains whiche he moot haue foure maners of pacience

[663] ¶ The firste greuaunce is of wicked wordes. þilke suffred Ihū crist wipoute grucching ful paciently whan þe iewes despised him and reproued him ful ofte. [664] suffre þou þerfore paciently ¶ For þe wise man saip ¶ If þou striue with a fool. þough þe fool be wroþ or þough he laughhe algate þou schalt haue no rest [665] ¶ That oper greuaunce outward is to haue damage of þi catel: þer agayn suffred crist ful paciently whan he was despoylid of al þat he had in his lif and þat nas but his cloþis [666] ¶ The þridde greuaunce is. a man to haue harm in his body. þat suffred crist/ ful paciently in al his passioun [667] ¶ The ferþe greuaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis wherfore I say þat folk þat maken here seruazntz to trauaile to greuously or out of tyme as on haly dayes. sopely þay doon greet synne [668] ¶ Here against suffred crist ful paciently and taughte vs pacience whan he bar vpon his blisful schulder þe croys vpon which he schulde suffre despitous deth. [669] here may men lerne to be patient. For certes nought oonly cristen ben patient for þe loue of ihū crist and for guerdoun of þe blisful life þat is perdurable But þe olde paynymes þat neuer were cristen comaundedin and vseden þe vertu of pacience

[670] ¶ A philosopher vpon a tyme þat wolde haue bete his disciple for his grete trespas. For which he was gretly amoeued and brought a zerde to scoure þe child. [671] & whan þe child saugh þe zerde: he sayde to his maister ¶ what þenke 3e to do ¶ I wolde bete þe quod þe maister for þi correccioun [672] Forsope quod þe child. 3e oughte first correcte 3oure silf þat han left al 3oure pacience for þe gilt of a child [673] ¶ For soþe quod þe maister al wepyng. þou

saist' soth. haue þou þe 3erde my deere sone and  
 correcte me for myn impacience. [674] Of pacience cometh  
 obedience. þurgh which a man is obedient to crist/ and  
 to alle hem to which him oughte to be obedient in crist.  
 [675] and vnderstonde wel þat obedience is parfyt.  
 whan a man doþ gladly & hastily with good  
 herte outrely al þat he scholde do [676] ¶ Obedience is  
 generally to parforme þe doctrine of god and  
 of his soueraignes to whiche him oughte to ben obeissant  
 in alle rightwisnes.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[677]

**A**fter þe synne of enuye and Ire. now wol I  
 speke of [ . . . no gap] accidie. For enuye  
 blendith þe hert of a man and Ire troublith  
 a man and accidie makith him heuy. þoughtful. and  
 wrawe [678] ¶ Enuye and Ire maken bitternes in herte.  
 which bitternesse is mooder of accidie and bynimit  
 þe loue of alle goodnes. þanne is accidie þe  
 anguische of trouble hert and seint augustyn saith  
 [ . . . no gap] [679] ¶ Certes  
 þis is a dampnable synne. For it doþ wrong to Ihū  
 crist in as moche as it bynymeth þe seruice þat we  
 ought to do to crist wip alle diligence as saith Salomon  
 [680] ¶ But accidie doþ noon such diligence. he doþ  
 alle þing wip anoy and with drawenes. slaknes  
 and excusacioun. and with ydelnes & vnlust for  
 which þe book saith ¶ Accursed be he þat doþ þe  
 seruice of god negligently [681] [ . . . no gap]  
 enemy to euery astat of man ¶ For certes þestat of  
 [ . . . [682] . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 Innocence. as was þestate of adam biforn þat he fel in to  
 synne in which estate he is holden to worche as in  
 heryng and honouryng of god [683] ¶ Anoper astat  
 is þe state of sinful man. in which estate. men ben holden

to labore in praying to god for amendement of her synnes. and þat he wolde graunte hem to rise of here synnes [684] ¶ Anoper estaat is þestate of which he is holde to werkis of penitence and certes to alle þese þinges is accidie enuye contrarie for it louep no busynes at al [685] ¶ Now certis þis foule synne accidie is eek a ful gret enemy to þe lifode of þe body For it hath no purueaunce azens temperel necessite. for it forslowthith and forsluggith and destroyeth alle goodes temporels by rechelesnes

[686] ¶ The ferþe þing is þat accidie is like hem þat ben in þe peyne of helle by cause of her slouþe and of her heuynes For þay þat ben dampned ben so bounde þat þay may nought wel do ne wel þenke [687] ¶ Of accidie cometh first þat a man is annoyed and encombrid for to do eny goodnes. and makith that god hap abhominacioun of such accidie as saith seint Iohan.

[688] ¶ Now comeþ slouþe þat wol suffre noon hardnes ne no penaunce For sopely slouþe is so tendre and so delicat as saith Salomon þat he wol suffre noon hardnes ne penaunce. and þerfore he schendeth al þat he doth [689] ¶ Agayns þis roten hertid synne of accidie and of slouthe schulden men exercise hemself to do goode werkes and manly and vertuously cacchin corrage wel to doo. þink- ing þat oure lord ihū crist quiteþ euery good dede be it neuer so lyte. [690] ¶ Vsage of labour is a ful greet þing. for it makith as saip seint Bernard þe laborer to haue stronge armes and harde synewes ¶ And slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre [691] ¶ Thanne comeþ drede to bygynne to werke eny goode deedes. For certes what þat is enclined to don synne him þinkith it is so gret emprise for to vndertake to doon werkes of goodnes [692] / as [ . . . . . ]

. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap*] saip seynt gregory

[693] ¶ Now comen wanhope þat is despair of þe mercy of god þat comen som tyme of to moche outrageous sorwe <sup>1</sup>and som tyme of to moche drede ymagynge þat he hap do so moche synne þat it wil not auaille him þough he wolde repent him and forsake synne. [694] þurgh which despeir or drede he abundith al his herte to alle maner synne as seith seint augustin. [695] whiche dampnable synne if þat it continue vnto his lyues ende it is cleped synnyng of þe holy gost. [696] This horrible synne is so perilous. þat he þat is despaired þer is no felonye ne no synne þat he doutith for to do. as schewed wel by Iudas. [697] Certes aboue alle synnes. þan is þis synne most displesant to crist and most aduersarie [698] sothely he þat despisith him is like þe coward campioun recreaunt þat seith recreaunt wipoute neede. allas allas needeles is he recreaunt and needeles despaired [699] ¶ Certes þe mercy of god is euer redy to þe penitent and is aboue alle his werkes. [700] allas can not a man byþenk him on þe gospel of seint luk/ wher as crist saith þat as wel schal þer be ioye in heuen vpon a synful man þat doþ penitence as vpon nynety and nyne þat ben rightful men þat [. . . . . *no gap*] needen no penitence [701] ¶ loke forþer in þe same gospel þe ioye and þe fest of þe goode man þat had lost his sone. whan þe sone with repentaunce was torned to his fader [702] ¶ Can not þay remembre eek þat as saip seint luk xxij°. how þat þe þef þat was hangid biside ihū crist sayde ¶ lord remembre of me whan þou comest in to þy regne [703] ¶ Forsoþe saith crist. to day þou schalt be wip me in paradys [704] ¶ Certis þer is noon so horrible synne of

[<sup>1</sup> leaf 272, back]

man þat it may in his lif be destroyed with penitence  
 þorough vertu of passioun of þe deth of crist  
 [705] ¶ Allas what needith it man þanne to be despaired  
 sith þat his mercy is so redy and large. aske and haue  
 [706] ¶ Thanne cometh sompnolent þat is sluggy  
 slumbring which makip a man ben heuy and dul in  
 body and in soule. and þis synne cometh of slouþe  
 [707] and certes þe tyme þat by way of resoun man  
 schulde nouȝt slepe þat is by þe morwe but if þer were  
 cause resonable [708] For sopely þe morwe tyde is  
 most/ couenable to a man to say his prayers and for  
 to þenk vpon his god and to honoure god and to  
 ȝeue almes to þe pore þat first cometh in þe name  
 of crist [709] ¶ lo what saith Salamon. ¶ who-so wol  
 by þe morwe arise and seeke me schal fynde  
 [710] ¶ þan cometh negligence that/  
 rekkith of no þing and how þat ignoraunce be  
 moder of alle harm: Certis necgligence is þe norice  
 [711] ¶ Negligence doþ no force whan he schal doon  
 a þing whethir he doo it wel or baddely

[712] ¶ Of þe remedy of þese tuo synnes as saith  
<sup>1</sup>þe wise man ¶ That he þat dredith god he sparith nouȝt  
 to do þat him ought to don. [713] and he þat loueth  
 god wol do diligence to plesse god by his werkis  
 and abounde himself with alle his mightes wel for to doon  
 [714] ¶ Thanne comith ydelnes þat is þe ȝate of alle  
 harmes. and ydil man is like an hous þat/ hap noone  
 walles. þe deueles may entre on euery syde or schete  
 at him at discouert/ by temptaciouns on euery syde  
 [715] ¶ This ydelnes is þe thurrok/ of alle wickid  
 vileyns þoughtes and of alle iangles tryfles and of  
 alle ordure [716] ¶ Certes þe heuen is ȝeuen to hem þat  
 wol laboure and nouȝt to ydil folk ¶ Eke dauid saith  
 That / þay ne ben not in þe labour of men ne þay schul  
 not be wiped with men þat is to sain in purgatorie

¶ *Omnium ma-  
 lorum mater est  
 negligencia*

[717] ¶ Certes þanne semeth it þat þay schal be tormentid wip þe deuel in helle but if þay don penitence

[718] ¶ þanne comith þe synne þat men clepe tarditas. as whan a man is so latrede or tarying er he wil torne to god. and certis þat is a gret foly. he is like him þat fallith in to þe dicke and wol not arise / [719] And þis vice cometh of a fals hope þat he þinkith he schal lyue longe. but þat hope fayleþ ful ofte

[720] ¶ þanne comith laches. þat is he when he bigynneth any good werk anoon he wol forlete it and stynte as doon þay þat han eny wight to gouerne. and ne take of hem no more keep anoon as þay fynde eny contrarie or eny anoy [721] ¶ þese ben þe newe schepherdes þat leten her schep wityngely go renne to þe wolf þat is in þe breres or don no force of her oughne gouernaunce. [722] Of þis cometh pouert and destruccioun boþe of spirituel and of temperel þinges ¶ Thanne cometh a maner of coldenesse þat freseþ al þe hert of man [723] þanne cometh vndeucioun þurgh which a man is so blunt & as saith seint Bernard he hap such a langour in soule þat he may neyþer rede ne synge in holy chirche ne heere ne þinke ondeucioun in holy chirche ne trauayle with his hondes in no good werk þat nys þo him vnsauory and al [724] þanne waxith he slow and slombry and soone wol he be wroþ and soone is enclined to hate and to enuye [725] ¶ þanne comith þe synne of worldly sorwe such as is clepid tristicia þat sleth man as saith seint poule [726] ¶ For certis such sorwe werkith to þe deth of þe soule. & of þe body also. For þer of cometh þat a man is anoyed of his oughne lif. [727] which sorwe schorteth ful ofte þe lif of a man or þat his tyme is come by way of kynde

[No break in the MS.]

[728] ¶ Agains þis horrible <sup>1</sup>synne of accidie and þe braunches of þe same þer is a vertu þat is cleped fortitudo or strengþe þat is affeccion þurgh which a man despiseth alle noyous þinges [729] ¶ This vertu is so mighty & so vigurous þat it dar wipstonde mighty and wisely kepe himself from perils þat ben wicked and wrastil agains þe assautes of þe deuel. [730] For it enhaunsith and enforceþ þe soule. Right as accidie abateth it and makith it feble. For þis fortitudo may endure by long sufferance þe trauailes þat ben conuenables

[731] ¶ This vertu hap many spices. þe first is cleped magnanimite þat is to sayn gret corrage. For certis þer bihoueþ gret corrage agains accidie lest þat it ne swolwe not þe soule by þe synne of sorwe or destroye it by wanhope [732] ¶ This vertu makith folk vndertake harde þinges and greuous þinges by his owne wille willfully and resonably. [733] and for als moche as þe deuel fighteth agaynst a man more by queyntise and by sleight þan by strengþe: þerfore many a man schal azeinstonde him by witte. and by resoun and by discrecioun. [734] Thanne is þer þe vertu of faith and hope in god and in his seintes to eschew. and to acomplise þe goode werkes in þe whiche he purposith fermely to continue. [735] thanne comeþ seurte or sikernes and þat is whan a man doutith no trauaile in tyme comyng of good werk þat a man hap bygonne [736] ¶ þanne comeþ magnificence þat is to say whan a man doth and parformith grete werkes of goodnesse þat he hath bygonne. and þat is þende why þat men schulden do goode werkes. for in þe accomplisg of grete goode werkes liþ þe grete guerdoun. [737] þanne is þer constaunce þat is stablenes of corrage and þis schulde ben in herte by stedefast faip. and in mouthe. and in



beryng'. and in cheer and in deede. [738] eek' þer ben  
mo special remedies agayns accidie, in dyuers werkis  
and in consideracioun of þe peyne of helle and of þe  
ioye of heuen and in þe trust of þe hyhe grace of þe holy  
gost'. þat' wil ȝeue him might' to parforme his good  
entent.

[*No break in the MS.*]

[739] De Auaricia [*from margin*]

**A**fter accidie! I wil speke of auarice and of  
coueytise. Of whiche synnes For sothely whan  
saith sein poule þat' þe roote of alle eueles &  
harmes is coueytise/ [740] and þat' þe hert' of  
man is confoundid in it self' and troublid and þat' þe  
soule hap' lost' þe comfort of god. þanne seekith he an  
ydel solas of worldly þinges.

[741] ¶ Auarice after þe descripcioun of seint' austyn.  
is a likerousnes in hert' to haue erpely þinges  
[742] ¶ Some oþer folk' sayn þat' auarice is for to  
purchase many erpely þinges and no þing' ȝeue  
to hem þat' han neede [743] ¶ And vnderstonde þat'  
auarice ne stont' not' oonly in lond ne in catel! But som  
tyme in science and in glorie and eny maner  
outrageous þinges is auarice [744] ¶ And  
þe difference bytwixe auarice and coueytise is þis.  
Coueitise is for to coueyte suche þinges as þou  
hast' not' [ . . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [745] ¶ And  
auarice is a synne þat' is ful dampnable. For al holy  
writ curseth it' and spekith agayn þat' vice. for it dop  
wrong' to Ihū crist'. [746] For it bireueth him þe loue  
þat' men to him owen and turnith it' bakward agains  
al rezoun. [747] and makith þat' þe auarous man  
hath more hope in his catel þan in ihū crist'. and  
[ . . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [748] þerfore saith

seint poule ad Ephesios. þat an auerous man is  
þe þraldom of ydolatrie

[749] ¶ what difference is þer bitwen an ydolaster and  
an auarous man. but þat an ydolaster þer aduenture  
hadde but a mawmet/ [ . . . . .  
. . . . .  
*no gap*] [750] ¶ and certes þe synne of mawmetrie is  
þe firste þing þat god defendith in þe ten comaunde-  
mentz as berip witnes in *exodo capitulo* [751] þou  
schalt/ haue noone false goddes biforn me. ne þouschalt make  
to the no graue þing. thus is he an auerous man þat  
loueth his tresor toforn god ¶ And an ydolaster [752] þurgh  
his cursed synne of auarice and coueytise comen þese  
harde lordschipes þurghliche thay ben distreyned  
by talliages custumes and cariages more þan here  
duete of resoun is. and elles take þay of here bonde  
men amercimentes whiche mighte more resonably ben  
callid extorciouns þan mercymenis. [753] of whiche  
mersymenis and raunsonyng of bonde men some  
lordes stywardes seyn þat it is rightful. For as moche as  
a cherl hap no temperel þing þat it nys his lordes  
as þay sayn [754] ¶ But certes þise lordschipes doon  
wrong þat bireuen here bonde men þinges þat þay  
neuer 3aue hem. Augustine [ . . . *blank in MS.*] [755]  
soth is þe condicioun of þraldom and þe firste  
cause of þraldom is sinne *Genesis*

[756] ¶ Thus may 3e seen þat þe gilt deserued  
þraldom but not nature [757] ¶ wherfore þese lordschipes  
schulden nouzt moche glorie in here lordschipes  
sith þat by naturel condicioun þay ben nouzt lordes ouer  
þalles. but for þraldom com first by þe desert of  
synne [758] ¶ And forther-ouer þer as þe lawe sayth  
þat temporel goodes of bonde folkes been þe goodes  
of her lordschipes: 3e þat is to.<sup>1</sup> vnderstonde. þe goodes  
of þe emperour to defende in here right. but not  
to robbe hem ne to reue hem. [759] and þerfore

seip Seneca. ¶ Thi prudence schulde liue benignely wip  
 þi þrallis [760] þilke þat þay clepe thralles  
 ben goddes poeple. For humble folk ben cristes frendes  
 þay ben contubernially wip þe lord

[761] ¶ Thenk eek as of such seed as cherles  
 springen. of such seed springe lordes. as wel may  
 þe cherl be saued as þe lord. [762] The same deth þat  
 takith þe cherl [. . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] as þou woldist  
 þi lord dide wip þe if þou were in his plyt.  
 [763] Euery sinful man is a cherl as to synne ¶ I rede  
 þe certes þat þou lord werke in such a wise wip  
 þy cherles þat þay raper loue þe þan drede þe. [764]  
 I wot wel þer is degre aboue degre as resoun  
 is and skil þat men don her deuoir þer as it is dewe.  
 ¶ But certes extorciouns and despit of oure vndirlinges is  
 dampnable

[765] ¶ And forþermore vnderstonde wel þat  
 conquerours or tyrauntes maken ful ofte þralles of  
 hem þat born ben of als royal blood as ben þay þat  
 hem conqueren. [766] þis name of cherldom was  
 neuer erst couth til noe sayde þat his sone  
 chanaan schulde be þral of his breþeren for his synne  
 [767] ¶ what say we þanne of hem þat pylon and doon  
 extorciouns to holy chirche ¶ Certis the swerdes þat  
 men zeuen first to a knight whan he is newe dubbyd  
 signifieth faith and þat he schulde defende holy chirche.  
 [. . . . .  
 . . . *no gap*] [768] and as seith seint austin. Thay ben  
 þe deueles wolues þat stranglen þe scheep of ihū  
 crist. and doon wors þan wolues. [769] for soþely  
 whan þe wulf hap ful his wombe he stintith to  
 strangle scheep. but soþly þe pilours and þe destroy-  
 ers of þe goodes of holy chirche ne doon nouȝt so. For þai  
 stynte neuer to pile. [770] ¶ Now as I haue sayd. sith so  
 is. þat synne was first cause of þraldom. þanne is it

þus. þat ilke tyme þat al þis world was in synne.  
þanne was al þis world in þraldom and in subieccioun  
[771] But certis sith þe tyme of grace com: God  
ordeyned þat somme folk schulde be more heigh in estaate  
and in degre and somme folkes more lowe and þat  
euerich schulde be serued in here estate and in degre  
[772] ¶ And þerfore in somme contrees þere þay ben  
thralles whan þay han turned hem to þe faith: þay make  
here þralles free out of thraldom ¶ And þerfor certis  
þe lord oweth to his man þat þe man owith to  
þe lord. [773] ¶ The pope callith himself seruau<sup>t</sup>  
of seruau<sup>ts</sup> of god ¶ But for as moche as þe staat/ of  
holy chirche [ . . . . . no gap] to þe commune  
profit might nought haue ben kepte ne pees <sup>1</sup>ne reste in  
erthe. but if god had ordeyned som man of  
heiher degre and some men of lower: [774] þerfore was  
soueraignte ordeyned to kepe and to mayntene and de-  
fende her vnderlynges or her subiectis in resoun as fer-  
forth as it lith in her power and not to destroye  
ne confounde hem [775] ¶ wherfore I say þat þilke lordes  
þat be like wolues þat deuouren þe possessioun of  
þe catel of pore folk wrongfully wipoute mercy or  
measure: [776] þay schul receyue by þe same measure  
þat þay han mesured to pouer folk þe mercy of ihū  
crist but if it be amendid [777] ¶ Now comeþ deceipt  
bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. and þou schalt vnder-  
stonde þat marchaundise is in many maneres. þat oon  
is bodily. and þat oper is gostly. þat oon is honest  
and leful. and þat oper is dishonest & vnleful  
[778] ¶ Of þilke bodily marchaundise þat is honest and  
leful is þis. þat þer as god hap ordeyned þat a  
regne or a cuntre is suffisaunt/ to himself. þanne is it  
honest/ and leful þat of þe abundaunce of þis contre  
þe men helpe anoper cuntre þat is more needy  
[779] ¶ And þerfore þer moote be marchauntz to  
bringe fro þat oon cuntre to þat oper her march-

aundise [780] ¶ That oper marchaundise þat men  
 hauntyn with fraude and treccherie and deceipt/ with  
 lesynges and fals othis is cursed and dampnable  
 [781] ¶ Espirituel marchaundiȝe is proprely symonie  
 þat is ententyf desire to beye þing/ espirituel þat is  
 þing þat apperteyneth to þe seintuarie of god and to  
 þe cure of þe soule [782] þis desir is if so be þat a  
 man do his diligence to performe it. al be it þat his  
 desir take noon effect. ȝit is it/ to him a dedly  
 synne. and if he be ordrid he is irregular [783] ¶ Certis  
 Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus þat wolde han  
 bought for temporel catel þe ȝifte þat god had ȝiuen  
 by þe holy gost to seint petir and to þapostlis  
 [784] ¶ And þerfor vnderstonde þat boþe he þat  
 sellith and he þat bieth þinges espiritueles ben  
 cleped Symonials be it by catel be it by procurement  
 or by fleissly prayere of his frendes eiper fleshly frendes  
 or spirituel frendes [785] ¶ Fleissly in tuo maneres  
 as by kynrede or oper frendes ¶ Sothely if þay pray  
 for him. it is not worth [ . . . . . no gap] if he  
 take þe benefice it is Symonie. and if he be worthy & able.  
 it is non [786] ¶ That oper is whan man or  
 womman prayen for folk to avaunce hem oonly for  
 wikkid fleissly affeccoun þat þay haue vnto þe persone  
 and þat is ful Symonye. [787] but certis in seruice  
 [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap]  
 moot he be honest and ellis not. and eek þat it be  
 withoute bargaynyng and þat þe persone be able  
 [788] ¶ For as saith seint Damase ¶ Alle þe synnes of þis  
 world at þe reward of þis synne is a þing of nought.  
 For it is þe gretteste synne þat may be after þe synne  
 of lucifer and antecrist [789] ¶ For by þis synne god  
 forlesith þe chirche and þe soule þat he bouȝt wip  
 his precious blood by hem þat ȝeuen chirches to hem  
 þat ben not digne [790] ¶ For þay putten in þeues þat

stelen þe soules of ihū crist and destroyen patri-  
 moygne. [791] by suche vndigne prestis and curates.  
 han lewed men þe lasse reuerence of þe sacrament/ of  
 holy chirche and suche ȝeueres of chirches putten out  
 þe children of crist. and putten in to þe chirche þe  
 deueles oughne sone. [792] þay sellen soules  
 þat lambes schulde kepe to þe wolf þat stranglith  
 hem. And þerfore schul þay neuer haue part  
 of þe pasture of lambes þat is þe blisse of  
 heuen [793] ¶ Now comeþ hasardrie wip his appur-  
 tenaunce. as tables. and rafles. of whiche comeþ deceipt.  
 fals othis. chidynges and alle raueynes. blasphemynge.  
 and reneyng of god and hate of his neighebers. wast  
 of goodes out of tyme. and som tyme man-  
 slaughter. [794] ¶ Certes hasardours ne mowe not be  
 wipoute gret synne whil þay haunte þat craft [795]  
 ¶ Of auarice comeþ eek lesynges. þeste and fals witnessse and  
 falsopes ¶ And ȝe schul vndirstonde þat þese ben grete synnes  
 and expresse agains þe comaundementz of god as I haue  
 sayd [796] ¶ Fals witnessse is in word and eek in dede.  
 In word: as for to bireue þin neighebor his good name  
 by þy witnessinge. or bireue him his catel or his  
 heritage by þy fals witnessse. whan þou for Ire or  
 for meede. or for envie berest witnes or accusist  
 him or excusist him by þy fals witnes. or ellis ex-  
 cusist þiself falsly. [797] ware ȝow questemongers and  
 notaries ¶ Certis for fals witnessynge was Susanna in ful  
 gret sorwe and peyne and many anoper mo [798] ¶ The  
 synne of thefte is eek expresse agayns goddes hestis & þat  
 in tuo maners corporel and spirituel. [799] Corporel:  
 as for to take þy neighebores catel agayns his wille.  
 be it by force or by sleight. be it by mette. or by mesure.  
 [800] by stelynge eek of fals enditements vpon him and  
 in borwyng of þin neghebores catelle in entent neuer  
 to paye/ and in semblable þinges. [801] Es-  
 spirituel þeste. is sacrilege þat is to sayn hurt-

ynge of holy þinges . or of þing' sacred of crist ¶ Sacrilege is in tuo<sup>1</sup> maneres þat' oon is by resoun of holy place as chirches or chirchewes . [802] For whiche euery vileins synne þat' men doon in suche places may be clepid sacrilege or euery violence in semblable place ¶ þat' oþer maner is . as þo þat wipdrawen falsly þe rightes þat' longen to holy chirche [803] ¶ [ . . . no gap] and generally sacrilege is to reue holy þing' fro holy place . and vnholý þing' out of holy place . or holy thing' out of holy place

[No break in the MS.]

¶ Remedium contra Auariciam [from margin]

[804]

**N**ow schul 3e vnderstonde þat' þe releuyng of auarice is misericorde and pite largely taken . And men might axen why þat' misericord and pite is relieuyng of auarice . [805] ¶ Certes þe auaricious man schewith no pite ne misericorde to þe needeful man . For he delitith him in kepyng of his tresor and nouȝt in þe rescowyng ne relieuyng of his euen-cristen . & þerfore speke I first of misericord [806] ¶ Thanne is misericord as saith þe philosopher a vertu . by which þe corrage of a man is stired by þe myseise of him þat' is myseysed . [807] vpon which misericorde folwith in parformyng of chariteable werkis of misericord . [808] ¶ And certes þese moeuen men to þe misericord of ihū crist þat' ȝaf himself for oure gult . and suffred deþ for misericord and forȝaf vs oure original synne [809] and þer by relessid vs fro peyne of helle and amenusid þe peynes of purgatorie by penitence and ȝeueth grace wel to do and at þe laste þe ioye of heuen [810] ¶ The spices of misericorde ben for to loue and for to ȝiue . and eek' for to forȝiue and for to relesse and for to haue pite in herte and compassioun of þe meschief of his

euencristen and eek<sup>t</sup> chastize þe as neede is  
 [811] ¶ Anoper maner of<sup>t</sup> remedye agayns auarice is  
 resonable largesse but<sup>t</sup> sothely here bihouith þe con-  
 sideracioun of<sup>t</sup> þe grace of<sup>t</sup> ihū crist<sup>t</sup> and of<sup>t</sup> his  
 temporel goodes and eek<sup>t</sup> of<sup>t</sup> his goodes perdurable  
 þat<sup>t</sup> crist<sup>t</sup> ȝaf<sup>t</sup> vs. [812] and eek<sup>t</sup> to haue remembrance of<sup>t</sup>  
 þe dep<sup>t</sup> þat/ he schal resceyue he noot not<sup>t</sup> whanne  
 [ . . . no gap] and eke he schal forgon al þat he hath  
 saue oonly þat<sup>t</sup> he hap<sup>t</sup> dispendid in goode werkes

[813] ¶ But<sup>t</sup> for als moche as some folk<sup>t</sup> ben vnreson-  
 able men oughte to eschiewe foly largesse þam  
 clepen wast/ [814] Certes he þat<sup>t</sup> is fool-large ne  
 ȝiueþ nouȝt<sup>t</sup> his catel. [ . . . . . no gap] Sothely  
 what<sup>t</sup> þing<sup>t</sup> þat<sup>t</sup> he ȝiueþ for vayn glorie as to  
 mynstrals and to folk<sup>t</sup> for to bere his renoun in þe  
 world<sup>t</sup> he hap<sup>t</sup> synne and noon almes  
 [815] ¶ Certes he lesith foule his goodes þat<sup>t</sup> sekith  
 wiþ þe ȝift<sup>t</sup> <sup>1</sup>of<sup>t</sup> his good no þing<sup>t</sup> but<sup>t</sup> synne.  
 [816] he is like to an hors þat<sup>t</sup> sekith rap<sup>t</sup>er to drynke  
 drouy watir and trouble þan for to drinke watir of<sup>t</sup> þe  
 welle þat<sup>t</sup> is cleer. [817] And for as moche as þay ȝiue þer  
 as þay schuld not<sup>t</sup> ȝiue<sup>t</sup> to hem appendith þilke  
 malisoun þat<sup>t</sup> crist<sup>t</sup> schal ȝiue at<sup>t</sup> þe day of<sup>t</sup> doom to  
 hem þat<sup>t</sup> schal be dampned.

[No break in the MS.]

¶ De Gula [from margin]

[818]  
**A**fter auarice cometh Gloteny which is expresse eke  
 agayns þe comaundement of<sup>t</sup> god. Gloteny is  
 vnreasonable and desordeyned coueytise to ete and  
 to drynke. [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . no gap] [819] þis synne cor-  
 ruptid al þis world as is wel schewed in þe synne of<sup>t</sup>  
 adam. and of<sup>t</sup> Eua ¶ loke eek<sup>t</sup> what<sup>t</sup> saith seint poul of<sup>t</sup>  
 glotouns [820] ¶ Many saith seint/ poul gon of<sup>t</sup> whiche



I haue ofte said to ȝow and now I say it wepyng  
¶ That thenemyes of þe cros of crist of  
whiche þende is deth and of whiche here wombe is  
here god and here glorie in confusioun þat so  
saueren erþely þinges [821] ¶ he þat is vsant [. .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [822] to þis  
synne hath many spices ¶ The firste is dronkenes  
þat is thorrible sepulture of mannes resoun. And  
whan man is dronken he hath lost/ his resoun and  
þis is dedly synne [823] ¶ But schortly whan þat a  
man is not wont to stronge drinke and par auenture ne  
knowiþ not þe strengþe of þe drynk or hath feblesse  
in his heed or hap trauayled þurgh whiche he drynkith  
þe more and be sodeynly caught wiþ drynke it is no  
dedly synne but venial [824] ¶ The secounde spice of  
dedly synne is. whan þe spirit of a man wexith al trouble  
for drunkenesse. and bireueþ him his witte and his discre-  
sioun [825] ¶ The þridde spice of glotouns is whan a man  
deuoureth his mete and hap no rightful maner of etyng  
[826] ¶ þe ferþe is whan þurgh þe grete abund-  
aunce of his mete þe humours of his body been dis-  
temprid [827] ¶ þe fifte is þe Idilnes by to moche  
drinking. For which a man som tyme forgetith by þe  
morwe what he dide at eue or on þe night bfore

[828] In oþer maner ben distinct þe spices of  
glotonye after seint Gregory ¶ The firste is for to ete or drynke  
byfore tyme to ete ¶ The secound is. whan man ȝiueth him  
to delicate mete or drinke [829] ¶ The þridde is. whanne  
man takith to moche þerof ouer mesure ¶ The ferthe is  
curiosite with gret entent to make and apparayle  
his mete ¶ The fifte is. For to ete to gredely [830] ¶ These  
ben þe fyue fynGRES of þe deuyles hand. by whiche  
he drawith folk to synne. /

[831]

<sup>1</sup> **A** Gayns Glotonye is þe remédie abstinence as  
saip Galien. But þat holde I nouȝt meritorie. If  
he do it oonly for þe hele of his body ¶ Seint  
austyn wol þat abstinence be don for vertu and  
wip pacience. [832] Abstinence he saith is litil worth  
but if a man haue good wille þerto and but it be enforced  
by pacience. and by charite. and þat men doon it for  
goddes sake and in hope to haue þe blisse of heuen

[833] ¶ The felawes of abstinence ben attemper-  
aunce þat holdith þe mene in alle þinges. eek  
schame þat eschiewith al dishoneste. Suffisaunce þat  
seeketh noone riche metes ne drynkes ne doþ no force of to  
outrageous apparaillyng of mete [834] ¶ Measure also  
þat restreyneþ by resoun the dislaue appetit of etyng.  
Sobernes also restreyneþ [. . . . .]  
[835] . . . .] þe delicat wille to ete and þe lasse leysir  
[ . . . . .]  
. . . . . no gap in the MS.]

[No break in the MS.]

## ¶ De luxuria

[836]

**A**fter Glotonye þanne cometh leccherie. For þese  
two synnes ben so neih cosyns þat ofte tyme þay  
wol not departe. [837] Vnde paulus ad Ephesios ¶ Nolite  
inebriari vino &c. God wot þis synne is ful displeaunt  
þing to god. vino in quo est luxuria. For he sayde him-  
self. Do no leccherie. and þerfore he putte gret peyne  
agayn þis synne / in þe olde lawe. [838] If a wom-  
man þral were take in þis synne. sche scholde be  
beten with stoones to þe deth. and if sche were a gentil  
womman: sche schulde be slayn wip stoones. / and if sche  
were a bisschoppis douȝter: sche schulde be brent by  
goddis comaundement. [839] ¶ Forther ouer by þe  
synne of leccherie: god dreinte al þe world at þe

diluue ¶ And after þat he dreynte fyue citees with thonder  
layt and sonk hem in to helle

[840] ¶ Now let vs thanne speke of þilke stynkyng  
synne of leccherie þat men clepen aduoutry of weddid  
folk þat is to sayn if þat oon of hem be weddid  
or elles boþe [841] ¶ Seint Iohan saith þat aduoutris  
schuln be in helle in watir breunyng of fuyr and  
of brimston. In fuyr for þe leccherie. In brimston For þe  
stynk or her ordure. [842] ¶ Certis þe brekyng of  
þis sacrament is an horrible þing. hit was makid of  
god himself in paradis Confermed of ihū crist as  
witnesseth seint Mathew ¶ A man schal lete  
fader and mooder and take him to his wif and þay  
schul ben two in oon fleisch [843] ¶ This sacrament bitok-  
enep þe knyttyng togider of crist and of holy chirche  
[844] nat oonly þat god forbad aduotrie in dede:  
but eek he comaunded þat þou scholdest <sup>1</sup>not coueyte þy  
neyhebors wif [845] ¶ In þis heste seiþ seint  
austyn is forboden al maner coueytise to do  
leccherie ¶ lo what seiþ seint mathew in þe gospel. that  
who-so seth a womman to coueytise of his lust: he haþ  
doon lecchery wip hir in his herte. [846] ¶ here may 3e  
se þat nouȝt oonly þe dede of þis synne is forboden:  
but eek þe desir to do þat synne [847] ¶ This cursed  
synne annoyeth greuously hem þat it haunten and first  
to here soule. for he obligith it to synne and to pyne of  
þe dep þat is pardurable [848] ¶ vnto þe body annoyep  
it greuously. also for it dreyep him and wastith him &  
schent him. and of his blood he makith sacrifice to þe  
deuel of helle ¶ It wastith eek his catel and his substaunce.  
[849] and certes if þat it be a foul þing a man to waste  
his catel on wommen: ȝit is it a fouler þing whan þat  
for such ordure wommen dispende vpon men here catel  
and here substaunce [850] ¶ This synne as saith þe prophete  
byreueth man and womman her good fame and al here  
honour. and it is ful pleasaunt to þe deuel. For þer by

wynneth he þe moste pray of þis world  
 [851] ¶ And right as a marchaunt deliteþ him most  
 in chaffare þat he hap most auauntage of: Right  
 so delitith þe feend in þis ordure

[852] ¶ This is þe oper hond of þe deuel with fyue  
 fynGRES to cacche þe poeple to his vilonye [853] ¶ þe  
 firste fynger is þe foule lokyng of þe foule womman  
 and of þe foule man þat sleth right as a basiliskoc  
 sleþ folk by þe venym of his sight. For þe coueytise  
 of eyen folwip þe coueytise of þe herte [854] ¶ The  
 secounde fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikkid  
 manere. and þerfore saith salamon þat who-so  
 touchith and handelith a womman: he farith lik him  
 þat handelith þe scorioun þat styngith and sodeinly  
 sleeth þurgh his enuenemyng as who so touchith  
 warm picche. it schent his fynGRES [855] ¶ The þridde is  
 foule wordes þat farith lik fuyr þat right anon  
 brennep þe herte [856] ¶ The ferþe is þe  
 kysyng. and trewely he were a greet fool þat wolde  
 kisse þe mouth of a brennyng ouen or of a forneys:  
 [857] and more fooles ben þay þat kyssen in vilonye.  
 For þat mouth is þe moup of helle. and namely þise  
 olde dotard fooles holours. 3it wol þay kisse þough  
 þay may nought do & smater hem. [858] ¶ Certis þay  
 ben like to houndes. For an hound whan he comep to  
 a roser or by oper beautes. þough he may nouȝt  
 1pisse: ȝet wil he heue vp his leg and make a coun-  
 tenaunce to pisse. [859] and for þat many man weneth  
 he may not synne for licorousnes þat he doth  
 with his wif: Certis þat oppinioun is fals. God wot a  
 man may sle himself wip his owne knyf and mak  
 himself dronke of his oughne tonne [860] ¶ Certis  
 be it/ wif or child or eny worldly þing þat he  
 louth biforn god it is his maumet and he is an ydolastre /.  
 [861] man schulde loue his wyf by discrecioun  
 paciently and attemperelly. and þanne is sche as it

were his suster [862] ¶ The fyfte fynger of the deueles hond is þe stynkyng dede of leccherie [863] ¶ Certes þe fyue fyngres of glotonye þe deuel put in þe wombe of a man. & his fyue fyngres of lecchery bygripeth hym by þe reynes for to þrowe him in to þe fourneys of helle. [864] þere as þey schuln haue þe fuyr. and þe wormes þat euer schal lasten. and wepyng and wayling scharp hunger and þurst. and grislines of deueles þat schul alto-tere hem wipoute respit/ and wipouten ende [865] ¶ Of leccherie as I sayde soudren diuers spices of fornicacion þat is bitwen man and womman þat ben nouȝt married and þis is dedly synne and against nature [866] al þat is enemy and destruccioun to nature. [867] par fay þe resoun of a man tellip him wel þat it is dedly synne For als moche as god forbad leccherie and seint poule ȝeuith hem þat regne þat is due to no wight but hem þat doon synne dedly [868] Anoper synne of lecchery is for to bireue a mayden of hir maydenhede / for he þat so dop: Certes he casteth maydenhede out of the heighest degre þat is in þe present lif [869] and bireuith hir þilke precious fruyt þat þe book clepith þe hundrid fruyt. I can ȝeue it noon oper name in englich. but in latyn it is I-cleped *Centesimus fructus secundum Ieronimum contra Iovinianum* [870] ¶ Certes he þat so doth is cause of many harmes and vilenyes mo þan eny man can rekene. Right as he som tyme is cause of alle þe damages þat bestis doon in þe feeld þat brekith þe hegge or þe closure þurgh which he destroyep þat may not be restored: [871] for certes no more may maydenhode be restored þan an arm þat is smyten fro þe body retourne agayn to waxe. [872] sche may haue mercy þis wot I wel if sche do penitence but neuer schal it be þat sche nas corrupt [873] ¶ And al be it so þat I haue spoke som what of aduoutre: ȝit is it good to speke of mo <sup>1</sup>perils þat longen to aduoutre for to eschiewe þat foule

synne [874] ¶ Aduoutrie in latyn is for to sayn approching  
of oþer mannes bed þorugh þe which þat whilom  
were oon fleisch abounden here bodyes to oþer persones  
[875] ¶ Of þis synne as saip þe wise man  
many harmes cometh þer-of ¶ First brekyng of faith ¶ And  
certes faith is þe keye of cristendom. [876] and whan þat  
faith is broke & lorn: soþely cristendom stont  
veyn and wipouten fruyt [877] ¶ This synne is eek a  
þeef. For þeste is generally to speke to reue a wight his þing  
agayns his wille [878] ¶ Certis þis is þe foulest theft  
þat may be whan a womman stelith hir body from  
hire housbunde and ȝiueþ it to hire holour to defoule  
hire & stelith hir soule fro crist/ and ȝeuiþ it to  
þe deuel [879] ¶ This is a fouler þeste þan for to breke a  
chirche and stele chalises. For þese aduouteres  
breke þe temple of god spirituelly and stolen þe vessel  
of grace þat is þe body and þe soule ¶ For Ihū crist  
schal destroyen hem as saith seint poule [880] ¶ Sothely  
þis þeste doutyd gretly Ioseph whan þat his lordes  
wyf prayde him of vilonye whan he saide. lo my lady  
how my lord haþ take to me vnder my warde al þat he  
haþ in þis world. ne no þing of his power is oute of  
my power but oonly ȝe þat ben his wyf. [881] and  
how schuld I do þanne þis wikkidnes and synne so  
horribly agayns god and my lord. God it forbede  
¶ Alas al to litel is suche troupe now I-founde [882] ¶ The  
þridde harm is þe filthe þurgh which þay breken  
þe comaundement of god and defoule þe auctour of  
here matrimonye þat is crist. [883] For certis in so moche  
as þe sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne: So  
moche is it þe gretter synne for to breke it. for god  
makid mariage in paradis in þestat of Innocence to  
multiplie man kynde to þe seruice of god [884] and  
þerfore is þe brekyng þe more greuous. Of which  
breking comen fals heires ofte tymes þat wrongfully  
occupien mennes heritage. and þerfore wolde crist putte

hem out of þe regne of heuen þat is heritage to goode folk. [885] Of þis breking comeþ ek ofte tyme þat folk vnwar wedden or synnen wip her kynrede and namely þese harlottis þat haunten bordels of þese foule wommen þat mowe be likened to a comune gonge where as men purgen here entrayles of her ordure [886] ¶ what say we ek of putours þat lyuen by þe horrible synne of putrie & constreyne wymmen 3e som tyme his oughne wyf or his child as don <sup>1</sup> þese baudes to 3elde hem a certeyn rente of here bodily putrie ¶ Certes þese ben cursede synnes [887] ¶ Vnderstonde eek that avoutrie is set gladly in þe ten comaundements bituixe manslaughter and thefte. For it is grettest thefte þat may be. for it is thefte of body and soule / [888] and it is lik homicidie For it kerueth a-tuo hem þat first were makid oon fleisch. and þerfore by þe olde lawe of god þay scholde be slayn [889] ¶ But napeles by þe lawe of Ihū crist þat is lawe of pite whan he sayde to þe womman þat was founde in aduoutri and schulde haue ben slayn with stoones aftir þe wille of þe Iewes as was her lawe. Go quod ihū crist and haue no more wille to synne. or wilne no more to do synne. [890] ¶ Sothely þe vengeance of avouterye is awardid to [ . . . . . no gap ] helle / but it be destourbed by penitence [891] ¶ 3it ben þer mo spices of þis cursed synne. as whan þat oon of hem is religious or ellis bothe or for folk þat ben entred in to ordre as subdekin or dekin or prest or hospitalers and euer þe higher þat he be. þe gretter is þe synne. [892] þe þinges þat gretly aggreggith her synne is þe brekyng of here avow of chastite whan þay resceyued ordre. [893] and forþer ouer is soþ þat holy ordre is cheft of alle þe tresor of god and his especial signe and mark of chastite to schewe þat þay ben ioyned to chastite which þat is þe moste precious lif þat is [894] ¶ And eek þese ordred folk ben specially tytled to god and of þe

special meyne of god of whiche whan þay don dedly synne þay ben þe special traytours of god and of his poeple. [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and whil þay ben suche traytours: here prayer auayleþ not to þe poeple [895] ¶ Prestis ben aungels as by þe dignite of here misterie ¶ But forsoþe seint poul saith þat Sathanas transformeth him in aungel of light. [896] Sopely þe prest þat hauntith dedly synne: he may be likened to þe aungel of light. [. . . . . *no gap*] & he semeth aungel of light: but for soþe he is aungil of derknes [897] whiche ben þe sones of belie as schewith in þe book of kinges þat þay were þe sones of belial þat is þe deuel. [898] belial is to say wipoute Iuge and so faren þay þay þynke hem fre and han no Iuge no more þan hath a fre bole þat takith which cow þat him likeþ in þe toun [899] so faren þay by wommen For right as a fre bole is y-nough for al a toun: / Right so is a wikked prest corrupcioun ynough for al a parisch or for al a contray [900] ¶ These prestes as saip þe book ne conne not þe mistery of presthode. þe poeple ne <sup>1</sup>god ne knowe þay not. þay holde hem nought apayed as saith þe book of soden fleissh þat was to hem offred: but þay tooke by force þe fleissch þat is raw: [901] Certes so þese schrewes holde hem not appayed with rosted fleissh and sode fleissh wip whiche þe poeple feeden hem in gret reuerence. But þay wil haue raw fleisch of folkes wyues and here douztres [902] ¶ And certes þese wommen þat consenten to here harlotrie don gret wrong to crist and to holy chirche and alle halwes / and to alle soules for þay bireuen alle þese hem þat schulde worschipe crist and holy chirche and praye for cristen soules [903] ¶ And þerfore han suche prestis & here temmans eeke þat consenten to here leccherie þe malisoun of al þe court cristian til þay come to amendement



[904] ¶ The þridde spice of aduoutry is som tyme bitwix a man and his wif and þat is whan þay take noon reward in her assembling but only to þe fleischly delit as saith seint Ierom. [905] and ne rekke of no þing but þat þay be assembled by cause þat þay ben married. al is good ynough as þinkith hem. [906] But in suche folk hap þe deuel power as saith þe aungel Raphael to Thoby in here assemblyng þay 'putten ihū crist out of her herte. and ȝiuen hemself to alle ordure [907] ¶ The ferthe spice is þe assemble of hem þat ben of here kynrede or of hem þat ben of oon affinite or elles wip hem wip whiche here fadres or here kynrede han delitid in þe synne of leccherie. þis synne makith hem like houndes þat taken noon heede of kynrede [908] and certes parenteal is in tuo maneres eyþer gostly or fleisshly. gostly as for to dele wip her gossib. [909] For riȝt / so as he þat engendrith a child is his fleisshly fader: Riȝt so is his godfader his fader espirituel. for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemble wip hir gossib þan wip hire oughne fleischly fader or broþer [910] ¶ The fifte spice of þilke abhominable synne of which þat no man unneþe oughte to speke ne write. naþeles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt/. [911] [ . . . . . no gap in the MS.] but þough þat holy writ speke of horrible synne: Certes holy writ may not be defouled no more þan þe sonne þat schyneth on a dongehul [912] ¶ Anoper synne appertenith to lecchery þat cometh in sleping. & þis synne cometh ofte to hem þat ben maydenes and eek to hem þat ben corrupte and þis synne men clepen pollucioun þat cometh in .iiij. maners [913] ¶ Som tyme of languisschyng of body for þe humours ben to ranke and to abundaunt in þe body of man. somtyme of infirmite for þe feblenesse of þe vertu retentyf as phisik makeþ mencion. And som tyme for surfete of mete and drynke. [914] som tyme of

vileins þoughtes þat ben enclosed in mannes mynde  
 whan he [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] kepe him wisely or elles  
 may men synne greuously

[*No break in the MS.*]

[915] ¶ Now cometh þe remedye azens lecchery and þat  
 is generally chastite of wikkedhede and continence þat re-  
 streyneþ alle þe desordeigne moeuyngeþ þat comen  
 of fleischly talentes. [916] and euer þe gretter meryt  
 schal he han þat most restreyneth eschau-  
 fynges of ordure of þis synne. and þis is in þre  
 maneres. þat is to sayn chastite of mariage / chastite  
 of wikkedhede [917] ¶ Now schalt þou vnderstonde þat  
 matrimoigne is leful assemblynge of man and  
 womman þat resceyuen by vertu of þe sacrament þe  
 bond þurgh which þay may not be departid in al here  
 lif þat is to say whil þay lyuen boþe.  
 [918] þis as saith þe boke is a ful gret sacrament  
 God makid it / as I haue said in paradis and wolde him-  
 self be born in mariage [919] and for to holden mariage.  
 he was at þe weddyng wher as he turnede watir in to  
 wyn which was þe firste miracle þat he wrought in  
 erþe biforn his disciples [920] trewe effect of  
 mariage clensith fornicacioun and replenischith holy  
 chirche of good lynage. for þat is þe ende of mariage  
 and it chaungith dedly synne in to venyal bituixe  
 hem þat ben weddid [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] as wel as þe bodyes  
 [921] ¶ þis is verray mariage þat was first blessed by  
 god er þat þe synne bigan whan naturel lawe was in his  
 first poynt in paradis. and it was ordeyned þat / oo man  
 schulde haue but oon womman. and oon womman but oon  
 man as saith seint augustyn by many resouns

[922] ¶ First for mariage is figured bitwixe crist and

holy chirche ¶ Anoper is for a man is heed of  
 a womman algate by ordinaunce it/ schulde be so  
 [923] ¶ For if a womman had mo men þan oon: þanne  
 schulde sche haue mo hedes þan oon & þat were an  
 horrible þing biforn god. And eek a womman.  
 myzte nouȝt please to many folk al at oones. and also  
 þer ne schulde neuer be pees & rest among hem. For  
 euerich wolde aske his oughne þing. [924] and  
 forþer-ouer no man schulde knowe his oughne en-  
 gendrure ne who schulde haue his heritage and þe  
 womman scholde be þe lasse loued fro þe tyme þat  
 sche were ioyned to many men

[925] ¶ Now comen how þat a man schulde bere him  
 wiþ his wif and namely in tuo þinges þat is <sup>1</sup>to  
 sayn in sufferaunce and in reuerence and þat schewed crist  
 whan he made first womman. [926] For he ne made hire  
 not of þe heed of adam. for sche schulde not to  
 gret lordschipe haue / [927] þer as þe womman hap þe  
 maistry sche makith to moche disaray. þer nedith noon  
 ensample of þis. þe experience of þis of day by day  
 oughte suffice [928] ¶ Also certes god ne made nouȝt  
 womman of þe foot of adam. For sche ne scholde nouȝt be  
 holden to lowe for sche can not/ paciently suffre ¶ But god  
 made womman of þe ribbe of adam For womman schulde  
 be felawe vnto man [929] Man schulde bere him to his  
 wif. in faith in troupe and in loue as saip seint  
 poule. aman schulde loue his wif as crist loued  
 holy chirche [. . . . . no gap] þat deyed for it.  
 so schulde a man for his wyf if it were neede

[930] ¶ Now how þat a womman schulde be subiect  
 to hir housbonde þat tellith seint peter. iij°. c°. first in obedi-  
 ence [931] and eek/ as saip þe decre. A womman þat  
 is a wif as longe as sche is a wif sche hap noon  
 auctorite to swere ne to bere witnesse wipoute leue of  
 hir housbonde þat is hir lord. algate he schulde be so  
 by resoun. [932] sche schulde eek serue him in al

honeste and ben attempre of hir array / I wot wel  
 þat þay schulde sette here entent to please her house-  
 bondes but nought by here queyntise of array [933] ¶ Seint  
 Ierom saith þat wyues þat ben arrayed in silk and  
 in purple ne mowe nouȝt cloþe hem in ihū  
 crist ¶ loke what saith saint Iohn eek in þe same matier  
 [934] ¶ Seint gregori saith eek þat no wight sekith  
 precious cloþing ne array but oonly for veyn glorie to ben  
 honoured þe more biforn þe poeple [935] ¶ It is a gret  
 foly a womman to haue fair array outward and  
 hirsilf to ben foul inward [936] ¶ A wyf schulde eek be  
 mesurable in lokyng and in beryng and in laughyng  
 and discrete in alle hir wordes. [937] and  
 aboue alle worldly þinges sche schulde loue hir housebonde/  
 with al hire herte and to him to be trewe of hir body.  
 [938] so scholde an housebonde eke ben to his wif.  
 For sith þat al þe body is þe housebondes. so schulde  
 here herte ben. or ellis þer is bitwixe hem tuo as in  
 þat no parfyt mariage [939] ¶ Thanne schal men vnder-  
 stonde: þat for þre þinges a man and his wyf mowe fleischly  
 assemble ¶ The firste is in entent/ of engen-  
 drure of children to the seruice of god. for certis þat is  
 þe cause fynal of matrimoyne [940] ¶ The secounde cause is to  
 zelden euerych of hem his dette vn<sup>1</sup>to oþer of his body  
 ¶ For euerych of hem hap power of his oughne body  
 ¶ The þridde is for to eschiewe leccherie and vilenye.  
 þe ferþe forsoþe is dedly synne. [941] as to þe  
 firste it/ is meritory. The secounde also for as saip þe  
 decre þat sche hap merit of chastite þat zeldith to  
 hir housebonde þe dette of hir body. ȝe þough it/ be  
 agayn hir likyng and þe lust of hir hert [942] ¶ The  
 þridde maner is venial synne. and trewly scarsly may  
 eny of þese be wipoute venial synne for þe  
 corrupcioun and for þe delit. [943] The ferþe  
 maner is for to vnderstonde as if þay assemble oonly for  
 amorous loue and for noon of þe forsayde causes. but

for to accomplise þilke brennyng delyt þay rekke neuer how ofte. soþely it is dedly synne and ȝit wip sorwe some folk wole more payne hem for to doon þan to her appetit suffiseþ.

[944] the secounde maner of chastite is to ben a clene wydewe and to eschiew þe embrasynges of men and desiren þe enbrasynges of ihū crist [945] þese ben þo þat han ben wyues and han forgon here housbondes and eek wommen þat han doon leccherie and be relieued by penitence / [946] and certis if þat a wyf couþe kepe hir al chast by licence of hir housebonde so þat sche ȝeue non occasioun þat he agilt it were to hir a gret merit [947] ¶ Thise maner wymmen þat obseruen chastite moste be clene in herte as wel as in body and in þought and mesurable in cloþing & in countenaunce. abstinent in etyng and drynkyng in speche and in dede. and þanne is sche þe vessel or þe boyst of the blessed Magdaleyne þat fulfillith holy chirche ful of good odour. [948] ¶ The þridde maner of chastite is virginite. and it bihouep þat sche be holy in herte and clene of body. and þanne is sche spouse of ihū crist and sche is þe lif of aungels. [949] sche is þe preysyng of þis world. and sche is as þese martires in egalite. sche haþ in hir þat tonge þat tonge may nouȝt telle. [950] virginite bar oure lord ihū crist and virgine was himselue

[951] ¶ Anoper remedy agayns leccherie is specially to wipdrawe suche þinges as ȝiuen occasioun to þilke vilonye as is ease and etyng and drynkyng For certes whan þe pot boylith strongely. þe beste remedye is to wipdrawe þe fuyr [952] sleping eek in gret quiete is eek a greet norice vnto leccherie

[953] ¶ Anoper remedy agayns leccherie <sup>1</sup>is þat a man or a womman eschiewe þe companye of hem by whiche he doutith to be tempted. for al be it so þat þe dede be wipstonde. ȝit is þer gret temptacioun

[954] sothely a whit wal al þough it brenne not fully by stikyng of a candel ȝet is þe wal blak of stiking of a candel ful ofte tyme. [955] I rede þat no man truste in his oughne perfeccioun but he be strengier þan Sampson or holier þan Dauid. and wiser þan salamon

[956] ¶ Now after þat I haue declared ȝow þe seuē dedly synnes as I can & some of here braunches and here remedies: soþely if I coude I wolde telle ȝow þe ten comaundementes. [957] but so heigh a doctrine I leue to diuines. but/ napeles I hope to god þay ben touchid in þis litil tretys eue¶rich of hem alle

*De secunda parte penitencie [in margin]*

[958] **N**ow for as moche as þe secounde part of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth as I bigan in þe chapitre I say seint austyn saith. [959] Synne is euery word and euery dede / and al þat men coueyten agayn þe lawe of ihū crist. and þis is for to synne in herte in mouthe and in dede by þy fyue wittis þat been. sight heeryng smellyng tastyng or sauoryng or felyng [960] ¶ Now it is good to vnderstonden þe circumstaunces þat aggreggen moche to euery synne. [961] þou schalt considre what þou art þat dost þe synne wheþir þat þou be mal or femal. old oper ȝong gentil or þral. free or seruaunt hool or seek. weddid or sengle. ordrid. or vnordred wys or fool clerk or seculer [962] if sche of þy kyn bodily or gostly or noon. if eny of þy kynrede haue synned wip hire or noon and many mo þinges

[963] ¶ That oper circumstaunce is wheþer it be don in fornicacioun or in aduoutry or incest or noon or mayden or noon in maner of homicide or non horrible grete synnes or smale and how longe þou hast continued in synne [964] ¶ The þridde circumstaunce is þe place wher þou hast don synne wheþer in oper

mennes houses or in þin owne in feld or in chirche  
or in chirchehawe. in chirche dedicate or noon.

[965] For if [. . . . .]

. . . . .

*no gap in the MS.*] it be dedicate it is enterdited til it  
be reconsiled by þe bischop [966] and þe  
prest scholde be enterdyted þat dede such a vilonye to terme  
of al his lyf & scholde no more synge no masse and if he dede  
he schulde do dedly synne at euery tyme þat he song masse  
[967] ¶ The ferthe circumstaunce is by which media-  
tours as by which messagers<sup>1</sup> or for entysement or for  
consentement to bere companye with felawes For  
many a wrecche for to bere companye wol go to þe  
deuel of helle. [968] for þay þat eggyn or con-  
sentyn to þe synne ben parteneres of þe synne and  
of þe dampnacioun of þe synnere

[969] ¶ The fyfte is how many tymes  
þat he hap synned if it be in his mynde / and how ofte  
þat he hap falle. [970] For he þat ofte fallith in synne.  
despiseþ þe mercy of god and encresceth his synne  
and is vnkynde to crist and he waxith þe more feble  
to wipstonde synne and synneþ þe more lightly  
[971] and þe latter arrisith and is þe more eschiewe  
to schriue him. and namely to him þat hap ben his con-  
fessour. [972] For whiche þat folk whan þay falle agayn  
in here olde folies eyther þay forletin her confessours  
al vtterly or ellis þay departen here schrifte in diuers  
places. but sopely such departed schrifte hap no  
mercy of god of his synnes [973] ¶ The sixte circum-  
staunce is why þat a man synneþ as by which temptacioun  
[. . . . . *no gap*] or by ex-  
cityng of oþer folk or if he synne wip a womman by  
force or by hir owne assent. [974] or if þe womman  
maugre hir heed hap ben enforced or noon. þis  
schal sche telle. or for coueytise or for pouerte &  
if it was hire procuryng or noon and alle such maner

[<sup>1</sup> *leaf 253*]

harneys [975] ¶ The .vij. circumstaunce is in what maner he hap don his synne or how þat sche hap suffred þat folk han doon to hire. [976] þe same schal þe man telle pleyndly alle þe circumstaunces. and wheþer he haue synned wip commune bordeal womman or noon. [977] or doon his synne in holy tyme or noon. in fastyng tyme or noon. or biforn his schrifte of after his latter schrifte [978] And hap par aduenture broken his penaunce enioyned þerfore. by whos help or by whos counseil by sorcery or by oþer craft al moste be told [979] ¶ Alle þese þinges after þay be grete or smale engreggen þe consciens of a man and eek þe prest þat is þe iugge may þe better ben auysed of his iugement in ȝiuyng of þy penaunce / and þat is after þy contricioun. [980] For vnderstonde wel þat after þe tyme þat a man hap defouled his baptisme by synne if he wol come to sauacioun þer is noon oþer wey but penitence and schrifte of mouthe and by satisfaccioun [981] and namely by þe tuo. if þer be a confessour to which he may schryue him. and þe þridde if ȝe haue lif to parforme it.

[982] þanne schal men loke it and considre þat if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confessioun þer moste be foure condiciouns [983] ¶ First it moste ben in sorweful bitternesse of herte as sayde þe king Ezechiel to god ¶ I wol remembre me alle þe ȝeres of my lif in bitternes of myn hert. [984] þis condicioun of bitternes hap fyue signes. The first is þat confessioun moste be schamefast not for to couere ne hyde his synne but for he hap agultid his god and defoulid his soule [985] ¶ And herof saith seint augustyn. The herte tremblith for schame of his synne. and for he hath gret schamefastnes. he is digne to haue gret mercy of god. [986] Such was þe confessioun of þe publican þat wolde nouȝt heue vp his eyzen to heuen. For he had offendid god of heuen For which schamefastnes he had anon þe mercy of god [987] ¶ And þere seith



seint' augustyn þat' such schamefast' folk' ben next' forȝeuenes of remissioun [988] ¶ The secounde signe is humilite of confessioun ¶ Of which saip seint petre humblith ȝow vnder þe might' of god. þe hond of god is myȝty in confessioun For þer-by god forȝiueth þe synnes he alone hap þe power. [989] and þis humilite schal ben in herte and in signe outward. For right' as he hap humilite to god in his herte: right' so schulde he humble his body outward to þe prest' þat' sittith in goddes place [990] For which in no manere sith þat' crist' is souerayn and þe prest' is his mene and mediatour bi-twix crist' and þe synnere and þe synner is þe lasse as by way of resoun: [991] þanne schulde nouȝt' þe confessour sitte as lowe as þe synnere but' þe synnere schulde knele biforn him or at his feet' but' if maladye destourbid it' for he schal take no keep who sittith þere but' in whos place þat' he sitteth. [992] a man þat' hap trespassed to a lord and cometh for to axe him of mercy and to maken his accord / and settith him doun anon by þe lord. men wolde holde him outrageous and not' worþy so soone for to haue mercy ne remissioun [993] ¶ The þridde signe is þat' þy schrifte schulde be ful of teeris if men may wepe. and if he may not' wepe wip his bodily eyen let' him wepe wip his herte. [994] Such was þe confessioun of seint peter. For after he hadde forsake ihū crist'. he wente out' and wepte ful bitterly [995] ¶ The ferthe signe is þat' he lette nouȝt' for schame to schewen his confessioun. [996] Such was þe confessioun of þe magdaleyn þat' spared for no schame of hem þat' were at þe feste to go to oure lord <sup>1</sup>ihū crist' and byknowe to him hire synne [997] ¶ The fifte signe is þat' a man or a womman be obeisaunt/ to resceyue þe penaunce þat' him is enioyned. For certis ihū crist' for þe gultes of oon man was obedient' to his deth

[998] ¶ The oper condicioun of verray confessioun is þat' it' hastily be doon. For certes if a man had a dedly wounde. euer þe lenger þat' he taried to warisch

himself: þe more wolde it corrupte and haste him to  
 his deþ and eek þe wounde wolde be þe worse to  
 hele [999] ¶ and right so fareþ synne þat long  
 time is in a man vnschewed [1000] Certes a man oughte  
 soone schewe his synne for many causes as for drede  
 of deth þat cometh sodeinly and not certeyn what tyme  
 it schal come or ben in what place. and eek þe drecchyng  
 of oon synne draweth anoper [1001] and eek þe langer  
 he tarieþ þe ferþer is he from crist and if he abyde  
 vnto his laste day skarsly may he schriue him or re-  
 membre him of his synnes or repente for þe  
 greuous malady of his deth [1002] ¶ And for as moche as  
 he hap not in his lif herkened Ihū crist whan he  
 hap spoken: he schal crien to ihū crist at his laste  
 day. and scarsly wol he herken him. [1003] And  
 vnderstonde þat þis condicioun moste haue foure þinges  
 þy schrifte moste ben purueyed byforn and auysed.  
 For wikked haste doþ no profyt and þat a man can  
 schryue him of his synnes. be it of pride or of enuye and  
 so forþ alle þe spices and þe circumstaunces [1004] and þat  
 he haue comprehendid in his mynde the nombre and þe  
 gretnes of his synne [ . . . . .  
*no gap*] [1005] and eek þat he be contrit of his sinnes  
 and in stedefast purpos by þe grace of god neuer eft to  
 falle in synne and eek þat he drede and countrewayte  
 himself and þat he flee þe occasiouns of synne to whiche he  
 is enclyned [1006] ¶ Also þat þou schalt schriue þe of alle  
 þin synnes to oon man. and nat a parcel to oon man and  
 a parcel to anoper man þat is vnderstonde in entent  
 to parte þy confessioun as for schame or drede. for it  
 nys but strangelyng of þy soule [1007] For certes ihū  
 crist is enterely al good. in him is noon imperfeccioun. and  
 þerfore ouþer he forþiueth al parfiteley or elles neuer a  
 del. [1008] I say nought if þer be assigned to þy  
 penitencere for certein synne þat þou art bounde to  
 schewe him al þe remenaunt of þy synnes of whiche

pou hast ben schryuen of þy curate but if it like þe of þin humilite. þis is no departyng of schrifte [1009] ne I ne say not þere as I speke of diuisioun of confessioun <sup>1</sup>þat if pou haue licence to schryue þe to a discret and to an honest prest wher þe likith and eek by þe licence of þy curate þat pou ne maist wel schriue þe to him of alle þyn synnes. [1010] but let no synne be byhinde vntold as fer as pou hast remembrance. [1011] and whan pou schalt þe schriue to þi curate: telle him eke al þy synne þat pou hast doo sith pou were last I-schryue. þis is no wikkid entent of diuisioun of schrifte

[1012] ¶ Also þy verrey schrifte askith certeyn condiciouns. First þat pou schriue þe by þy fre wille nouȝt constreyned ne for schame of folk ne for maladye or such þing. for is resoun þat he þat trespassith wip his fre wille [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] confesse his trespas. [1013] noon oþer man schal telle his synne but himself. ne he schal not nayte or denye his synne ne wrappe him with þe prest for his amonestyng to lete synne [1014] ¶ The secounde condicioun is þat þy schrifte be laweful þat is to sayn þat pou þat schriuest þe and eek þe prest þat herith þy confessioun ben verrayly in þe feith of holy chirche [1015] and þat a man be nouȝt despaired of þe mercy of Ihū crist/ as caym or Iudas. [1016] and eek a man moot accuse himself of his owne trespas and not another: but he schal blame and wite himself and his oughne malice of his synne / and noon other [1017] ¶ But napeless if þat an oþer man by occasioun or ellis enticer of his synne or þat þe estate of a persone be such þurgh which his synne aggreggith or elles þat he may not playnly schryue hym but he telle þe persone wip which he hap synned þanne may he telle it [1018] so þat his entent be nouȝt to bakbyte þe persone: but oonly to declare his confessioun

[1019] Thow schalt nouȝt eke make no lesyng<sup>t</sup> in  
 þy confessioun for humilite [. . . *no gap*] to sayn  
 þat þou hast don synnes of whiche þou were  
 neuer gulty [1020] as seint augustyn saip ¶ If þou by  
 cause of humilite makest lesynges  
 on þiself<sup>t</sup>. þough þou were not in synne biforn  
 ȝit art þou þanne in synne þurgh þy lesynges [1021]  
 ¶ Thou most schewe þy synne by þyn oughne propre  
 mouth but þou woxe dombe. and not by no  
 lettre. for þou þat hast don þe synne þou schalt haue  
 þe schame. [1022] þou schalt nouȝt  
 peynte þy confessioun by faire subtil wordes to couer  
 þe more þy synne for þanne bigilist þou þiself<sup>t</sup> and  
 not þe prest<sup>t</sup>. þou most telle it platly be it  
 neuer so foul ne so horrible. [1023] þou schalt eek/  
 schriue þe to a prest þat is discrete to counsaile þe ¶ And  
 þou schalt nouȝt schryue þe for <sup>1</sup>veinneglorie ne for  
 ypocrisie. [ . . . . .  
 . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [1024] ¶ þou  
 schalt not eek renne to þe prest sodeinly to telle him  
 lightly þy synne as who-so tellith a tale or a iape. but  
 auysily and wiþ gret deuocioun<sup>t</sup> [1025] and generally  
 schriue þe ofte. if þou ofte falle<sup>t</sup> ofte þou aryse by  
 confessioun [1026] ¶ And þough þou schryue þe ofter  
 þan oones of synne of which þou hast ben schriuen<sup>t</sup> it is  
 þe more merite and as saith seint augustyn ¶ Thou  
 schalt haue þe more lightly relessyng<sup>t</sup> and grace of god  
 bothe of synne and of payne. [1027] and certes oones a  
 ȝer atte atte lest/ way it is laweful to be houselyd. For  
 sothely oones a ȝer alle þinges renouelen

[*No break in the MS.*]

[1028] ¶ Now haue I told of verray confessioun  
 þat is the secounde partye of penitence

[1029] ¶ De terciā parte penitencie

The þridde partye of penitence is Satisfaccioun and  
**T** þat stondith generally in almes dede and  
 bodily peyne [1030] ¶ Now ben þer [. . . .]  
 of almes dede ¶ Contricioun of herte where a man  
 offereþ himself to god ¶ The secounde is . to haue pite of þe  
 defaute of his neighebor ¶ The þridde is . in  
 good counseil and comfort gostly and bodily where men  
 han neede and namely in sustenaunce of mennes foode.  
 [1031] and take keep þat a man hap neede of [. . .  
 . . . . . no gap in the MS.]  
 cloping and herberwe. he hap [. . . .] charitable  
 counseil and visityng in prisoun and malady. and  
 sepulture of his dede body [1032] ¶ And if þou may not  
 visite þe needeful wip þy persone: visite by þy  
 message and by þy giftes. [1033] þese ben general  
 almeses or werkes of charite of hem þat han temporal  
 riches or discrecioun in counselynge. Of þese werkes  
 schalt þou hieren at þe day of doom

[1034] þis almes schalt þou doon of þin oughne  
 propur þinges and hastily and priuely if þou maist.  
 [1035] But napeles if þou maist not do priuely:  
 þou schalt nouȝt forbere to do almes þough men se  
 it / so þat it be nouȝt don for þank of þe world but  
 oonly for þonk of ihū crist [1036] ¶ For as witnessith  
 seint Mathewe .v<sup>to</sup>. ¶ A cite may not ben hid  
 þat is set on a mountayn ne non light not a lanterne and  
 put it vnder a buisschel but men sette it on a candel  
 stikke to lighte þe men in þe hous. [1037] Right  
 so schal ȝoure light lighten biforn men þat men may  
 se ȝoure goode werkes and glorifien ȝoure fader þat is in  
 heuen

[1038] ¶ Now as to speke of bodily peyne. it is in  
 prayere in wakinges in fastynges. in vertuous

techinges of orisouns. [1039] 3e schul vnderstonde þat orisouns or prayeres is for to seyn a pitous wil of herte þat redresseþ in god and expressith it by word outward to remembre harmes and to haue þinges espirituel & <sup>1</sup>durable and som tyme temporel þinges of whiche orisouns of þe orisoun of þe pater noster haþ oure lord ihū crist enclosed most þinges [1040] ¶ Certis it is priuiledged of þre þinges in his dignite [. . . . . no gap] þan any oþer prayer. For ihū crist himself maked it. [1041] and it is schort for it schulde be coud þe more lightly. and forto wiþholde it þe more esily in herte and helpe himselfe þe oftere with þe orisoun [1042] and for a man schulde be þe lasse wery to say it. and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it. it is so schort and so easy and for it comprehendith in it self alle goode prayeres [1043] ¶ The exposicioun of þis holy praier þat is so excellent and so digne. I hitake to þese maystres of theology. saue þus moche wol I sayn whan þou prayest/ þat god schulde forziue þe þy gultes as þou forziuest hem þat þey gulten to þe: be ful wel war. þat þou be not out of charite. [1044] þis holy orisoun amenisith eek venial synne. and þerfore it appendith specially to penitence.

[1045] þis praier moste be trewely sayd and in verray faith. and þat men pray to god ordinatly and discretly & deuoutly and alway a man schulde putte his wille to be subiect/ to þe wille of god [1046] ¶ þis orisoun moste eek be sayd wiþ greet humblesse and ful pure honestly and nouȝt to þe annoyaunce of eny man or womman ¶ It most eek be continued with þe werkis of charite. [1047] hit auaylith agayns þe vices of þe soule / as seiþ seint Ieron ¶ By fastyng ben saued þe vices of þe soule.

[1048] ¶ After þis þou schalt vnderstonde þat bodily peyne stant in wakyng. for ihū crist saith ¶ wakith and prayeth þat 3e ne entre not/ in. to

temptacioun. [1049] 3e schul vnderstonde þat fast-  
yng stont in þre þinges ¶ In forbering of bodily mete  
and drink. and in forberyng of worldly iolite. and in for-  
bering of worldly synne. þis is to sayn þat a man schal  
kepe him fro dedly synne in al þat he may

[1050] ¶ And þou schalt vnderstonde eek þat god  
ordeyned fastyng. and to fastyng appurteynen foure  
þinges [1051] ¶ largesce to pouer folk. gladnes of  
hert espirituel. not to ben angry ne annoyed ne  
grucche for he fastith. and also resonable hour for to  
ete. ete by mesure þat is to sayn a man schulde not ete in  
vntyme ne sitte þe lenger at his mete for he  
fastith

[1052] ¶ Thanne schal þou vnderstonde þat bodily  
peyne stant in discipline or teching by word or by  
wrytyng or by ensample. Also in heires weryng or  
of stamyn or of habeious on her naked fleisch for cristes  
sake and suche maner penaunce [1053] ¶ But ware þe wel  
þat such maner penaunce <sup>1</sup>of þyn fleissch make nouȝt  
þin herte bitter or angry or anoyed of þiself. for better is  
to cast away þin hayre þan for to caste away þe swet-  
nes of ihū crist. [1054] and þerfor seiþ seint poule  
¶ Clothe ȝow as þay þat ben chosen of god in herte of  
misericorde debonairete. sufferauce and such maner of  
cloping. of þe which ihū crist is more appayed þan of  
haire or of hauberkis

[1055] ¶ þan is eek in knokkyng on  
þe brest. in scourgyng wip ȝerdes. in knelynges. in  
tribulaciouns [1056] in suffring paciently wronges þat  
ben doon to him/ and eek in pacient sufferauce of maledies  
or lesyng of worldly catel or of wif. or of child or of  
opir frendes

[1057] ¶ Thanne schalt þou vnderstonde whiche þinges  
destourben penaunce / and þis is in foure þinges. þat is.  
drede. schame. hope. and wanhope. þat is desperacioun  
[1058] ¶ And for to speke first/ of drede for which he

weneth þat he may suffre no penaunce. [1059] þer  
agayns is remedye for to þinke þat bodily penaunce is  
but schort and litel at þe regard of þe peyne of helle þat  
is cruel and so long þat it/ lastith wipouten ende

[1060] ¶ Now agains þe schame þat a man hap to  
schryue him and namely þese ypocrites þat wolde  
be holde so parfyt þat þay haue no meede to schriue  
hem. [1061] agayns þat schame schulde a man þinke þat  
by way of resoun þat he hath not ben aschamed to  
do foule þinges. Certis him oughte not ben aschamed to  
doon faire þinges & goode þinges and þat is confessioun [1062]  
¶ And man scholde eek þinke þat god seeth alle þy  
þoughtes and þy werkes to him may no þing be  
hyd ne couered [1063] men schulde eek remembre  
hem of þe schame þat is to come at þe day of doom to  
hem þat ben nought penitent and schriuen in þis present  
lif. [1064] For alle þe creatures in heuen ne in erthe and in  
helle schuln seen apertly al þat he hydith in þis world

[1065] ¶ Now for to speke of hem þat  
ben so negligent and slowe to schryue hem stant in  
tuo maneres [1066] ¶ þat oon is. þat he hopith for to lyue  
longe and for to purchace moche riches for his delyt.  
and þanne he wol schriue him. and as he saith he may as  
him semith tymely ynough come to schrifte  
[1067] ¶ Another is of þe Surquidie þat he hap in cristes  
mercy [1068] ¶ Agains þe firste vice he schal þinke  
þat oure lif is in no sikernes. and eek þat al þe  
riches in þis world ben in aduenture and passen as a  
schadowe on þe wal [1069] and as saith seint Gregory  
þat it apperteyneth to þe grete rightwisnes of god þat  
neuer schal þe <sup>1</sup>peyne stynte of hem þat neuer  
wolde wipdrawe hem fro synne her þankes. but  
ay continue in synne for þilke perpetuel wille to doon  
synne. schul þay haue perpetuel peyne

[1070] ¶ wanhope in tuo maneres is. þe firste wan-  
hope is in þe mercy of crist ¶ That oper is þat þay



þinke þay mighte nought longe perseuer in goodnesse [1071] ¶ The firste wanhope cometh of þat he demyth þat he synned so highly and so ofte and so longe layn in synne þat he schal not be saued [1072] ¶ Certis azens þat cursed wanhope schulde he þenke þat þe passioun of Ihū crist is more strong for to vnbynde þan synne is strong for to bynde [1073] ¶ Agains þe secounde wanhope he schal þinke þat als ofte as he fallith he may arise agayn by penitence / And þough he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne þe mercy of crist is alway redy to resceyue him to mercy [1074] ¶ Agains þe wanhope þat he demeth þat he þinkith he schulde not longe perseuere in goodnesse. he schal þinke þat þe febles of þe deuel may no þing doon but men wol suffre him. [1075] And eek he schal haue strengþe of þe help of god and of al holy chirche and of þe proteccioun of aungels if him list

[1076] ¶ Thanne schal men vnderstonde what is þe fruyt of penaunce And after þe word of ihū crist ¶ hit is þe endeles blisse of heuen [1077] þer ioye hap no contrariete of wo ne of penaunce ne greuaunce. þer alle harmes ben passed of þis present lif. ther as is þe sikernes fro þe peyne of helle. [ . . . . . ]

. . . . . [1078] . . . . .

*no gap in the MS.*] þere as is þe body of man þat whilom was seek. frel and feble and is immortal. and so strong and so hool þat þer may no þing empeire it. [1079] þer nys neyþer hunger þurst ne colde. but euery soule replenished wip þe sight and þe parfyt knowyng of god [1080] ¶ This blisful regne may men purchase by pouerte espirituel and þe glorie by lowenes. þe plente of ioye by hunger and þurst and reste by trauaile and þe lif by deth and mortificacioun of synne.

[*Small break in the MS.*]

## ¶ Preces de Chauceres ./

[1081]

**N**ow pray I to ȝow alle þat heren þis litel tretis  
 or reden þat if þer be any þing þat likes  
 hem þat þer-of þay þanke oure lord ihū  
 crist of whom procedith alle witte and al goodnes  
 [1082] ¶ And if þer be eny þing þat displeith hem I  
 pray hem þat þay arette it to þe defaute of myn  
 vnconnyng<sup>1</sup> and not to my wille þat wolde fayn haue  
 sayd better if I hadde connyng [1083] ¶ For þe  
 book saip. al þat is writen. for oure  
 doctrine is writen [ . . . . . *no gap*] [1084] For I  
 biseke ȝow mekely for þe mercy of god þat ȝe pray for  
 me þat god haue mercy on me and forȝeue me my  
 giltes [1085] and nameliche my translaciouns and of endit-  
 yng/ in worldly vanitees. whiche I reuoke in my re-  
 tracciouns [1086] as is þe book of troyles. þe book  
 also of fame. þe book of .29. ladies þe  
 book of þe duchesses. þe book of seint valentines  
 day and of þe parliment of briddes. þe Tales of Cauntur-  
 bury alle þilke þat sounen in to synne [1087] þe book Many  
 of þe leo. and oþer bokes if þay were in my mynde / or  
 remembraunce and many a song and many a leccherous  
 lay. Of þe whiche crist for his grete mercy forȝiue me þe  
 synnes [1088] ¶ But of þe translacioun of bocce de consolacione  
 and oþer bokes of consolacioun and of legend of lyues of  
 seintes and omelies and moralitees and of deuocioun. [1089]  
 that þanke I oure lord ihū crist and his moder and alle þe  
 seintes in heuen [1090] bisekyng hem þat þay fro  
 hennysforth vn-to my lyues ende sende me grace to  
 biwayle my gultes and to studien to þe sauacioun of my  
 soule and graunte me grace and space of verray repentaunce.

[<sup>1</sup> *leaf 286*]

penitence . confessioun . and satisfaccioun . to don in þis  
present<sup>t</sup> lif [1091] þurgh þe benigne grace of him þat is king<sup>t</sup>  
of kynges and prest<sup>t</sup> of alle prestis þat bought<sup>t</sup> vs  
wip his precious blood of his hert<sup>t</sup> : [1092] So þat I moote  
be oon of hem at þe day of doom that schal be sauyd  
*Qui cum patre .*



## APPENDIX

## TO THE HARLEIAN MS 7334

## OF AN END-LINK, HYMN, AND CUTS, NOT IN THE MS.

- 
- |   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 1. The genuine <i>Nun's Priest's End-Link</i> , Group B,<br>§ 15, from MS Reg. 17 D xv, Brit. Mus. ...<br>( <i>'Twould have followd p. 172 above, had it been<br/>in the Harleian MS.</i> )   | 694  |
| 2. The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk Nicholas,<br>" <i>Angelus ad Virginem</i> " (A 3216, p. 92 abuv),<br>from the Arundel MS 248, ab. 1250-60 A.D.,<br>in English and Latin ; a facsimile and a print   | 695  |
| 3. Woodcuts of the Paintings of the 23 <i>Tellers of<br/>the Canterbury Tales</i> copied from the Ellesmere<br>MS, and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper.  |      |
| 4. Woodcuts of 6 <i>Tellers of 6 of the Canterbury<br/>Tales</i> — the Reeve, Cook, Wife of Bath,<br>Pardoner, Monk, and Manciple,—and of 6<br><i>Allegorical Figures for the Parson's Tale</i> ,—<br>Envy and Charity, Gluttony and Abstinence,<br>Lechery and Chastity,—copied from MS Gg.<br>4. 27 in the Cambridge University Library,<br>and cut, by Mr. W. H. Hooper. |      |

## 1.

## THE NUN'S PRIEST'S END-LINK.

[*MS Reg. 17 D xv., leaf 284 (paper, 11460).*]

**S**ir Nonnes prist'. our host' sayde anon  
 I-blessid be thy breche. and euery stoon  
 This was a mery tale of chauntilier  
 But be my trowth if thow were a seculer 4640  
 Thow woldest bien. a tredefoule aright  
 For if thow have corage. as thow hast myght  
 The were nede. of hennys as I wene  
 Ya mo than .vij. tymes. seventene 4644  
 Se whiche bawnes. hath this gentil prist'  
 So grete a nekke. and so large a brist'  
 He lokith as a sparhawke. with his Ien  
 Hym nedith nat'. his colours for to dyen 4648  
 With brasil ne with grayne of portyngale  
 Now *sir* faire fal yow. for youre mery tale  
 And after that he. with ful myrry chiere  
 Sayde vnto another as ye chul here

Here endith  
 the tale of  
 þe none  
 prest/

[*MS Reg. 17 D xv extract stops*]

["the prolog' of the Maunciple" follows in  
*MS Reg. 17 D xv.*]



**" ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM "**

**THE HYMN OF CHAUCER'S OXFORD CLERK: MILLER'S TALE. GROUP A f. 4. L. 3216.**

**BRIT. MUN. ARUNDEL MS. 248, LEAF 144.—AB. 1260-60 A D.**



## 2.

# The Hymn of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk, NICHOLAS,

## "ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM."

(Miller's Tale, Group A. l. 8216, p. 92, abuv.)

ENGLISH (rymes *ababcc, dde, cec*).

THE LATIN ORIGINAL:

Arundel MS. 248, leaf 154. Ab. 1250-60, A.D.

'ANGELUS AD VIRGINEM.'

## 1

Gabriel fram evene king  
sent to þe maide swete,  
broute<sup>1</sup> þire blisful tiding,  
And faire þe gan hire greten : 4  
"Heil be þu, ful of grace arith!  
"for godes sone, þis evene lith, 6  
"²for mannes louen,  
"wile man bicomem,  
"and taken 9  
"fles of þe, maiden brith,  
"ma[n]ken fre for to maken  
"of senne and deules mith." 12

## 2

Mildeliche im gan andsweren  
þe milde maiden þanne :  
'wiche wise sold ichs beren  
child with-huten manne?' 16  
þangle seide, "ne dred te nout!  
"þurw þoligast sal ben iwrou 18  
"þis ilche þing,  
"warof tiding  
"ichs bringe : 21  
"al manken wrth ibout  
"þur þi swete chiltinge,  
"and hut of pine ibrou." 24

## 1

Angelus ad uirginem  
subintrans in conclaue,  
Virginis formidinem  
demulcens inquit, "Aue!  
"Aue regina uirginum!  
"celi terreque dominum  
"concupies,  
" & paries,  
"intacta,  
"salutem hominum,  
"tu, porta celi facta,  
"medela criminum."

## 2

'Quomodo conciperem,  
'que uirum non cognoui?  
'qualiter infringerem  
'quod firma mente uoui!  
"Spiritus sancti gracia  
"perficiet hec omnia.  
"ne timeas,  
"sed gaudeas  
"secura,  
"quod castimonia  
"manebit in te pura,  
"dei potencia."

<sup>1</sup> e is an overline insertion. In lines 3, 4, 26, 28, 58, 60, &c. the 'þ' of þe, þir, þle, þerde, &c. stands for 'h'.

<sup>2</sup> A later overline 'so' is before 'for'; but the line should be only 2 measures.

## 3

Wan þe maiden understud,  
 and þangles wordes þerde,  
 mildeliche, with milde mud,  
 to þangle þie andswerde :  
 ' Hure lordes þenmaiden iwis  
 ' ics am, þat her abouen is ;  
 ' aneftis me  
 ' fulfurthed be  
 ' þi sawe,  
 ' þat ics, sithen <sup>1</sup>his wil is,  
 ' maiden, with-huten lawe,  
 ' of moder haue þe blis.'

## 4

þangle wente a-wei mid þan,  
 al hut of hire sichte ;  
 and <sup>2</sup>þire wombe arise gan,  
 þurw þoligastes mithe ;  
 in hire was crist biloken anon,  
 suth god, soth man, ine fleas and bon ;  
 and of hir fleas  
 iboren was  
 at time,  
 war-þurw us kam god won,  
 þe bout us hut of pine,  
 and let im for us slon.<sup>3</sup>

## 5

Maiden moder makeles,  
 of milche ful ibunden,  
 Bid for hus, im þat þe ches,  
 at wam þu grace funde,  
 þat þe forgiue hus senne and wrake,  
 and clene of euri gelt us make,  
 and eune blis,  
 wan hure time is  
 to steruen,  
 hus giue, for þine sake,  
 him so her for to seruen,  
 þat þe us to him take.

## 3

25 Ad hec, uirgo nobilis  
 respondens, inquit ei,  
 ' Ancilla sum humilis  
 28 ' omnipotentis dei,  
 ' tibi celesti nuncio  
 30 ' tanti secreti conscio,  
 ' consentiens  
 ' & cupiens  
 33 ' uidere  
 ' factum quod audio,  
 ' parata sum parere  
 36 ' dei consilio.'

## 4

Angelus disparuit,  
 & statim puellaris  
 uterus intumuit,  
 40 ui partus salutaris,  
 quo circumdatur utero  
 nouem mensium numero ;  
 post exiit,  
 & iniit  
 45 conflictum,  
 affigens humero  
 crucem qui dedit ictum  
 48 soli mortifero.

## 5

Eya mater domini  
 que pacem reddidisti  
 Angelis & homini  
 cum *Christum* genuisti,  
 tuum exora filium,  
 ut se nobis propicium  
 exhibeat,  
 & delet  
 57 peccata,  
 prestans auxilium,  
 uita frui beata,  
 60 post hoc exilium. AmeN.

<sup>1</sup> 'h' is an overline insertion.

<sup>2</sup> 'and' underdotted and struck through : but see '&' in Latin, st. 4. l. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The 'n' is a tailed final *n*, like a *y*.

**3.**

**WOODCUTS OF THE  
PAINTINGS OF THE 23 TELLERS OF  
THE CANTERBURY TALES**

**COPIED FROM**

**THE ELLESMERE MS**

**AND CUT BY**

**MR W. H. HOOPER.**



**THE KNYGHT.**

*Elfenmore MS, leaf 14.*

(The brand on the horse's hip—M, & for *Miles*—  
is in ink, and probably by a later hand.)



**THE MILLER.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 38, back.*





**THE REVE.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 46.*



**THE COOK.**

*Elcamero MS, leaf 51.*



THE MAN OF LAWE.  
*Ellesmere MS, leaf 54, back*



**THE SHIPMAN.**

*[Ellesmere MS, leaf 147, back.]*





**THE PRIORESSE.**

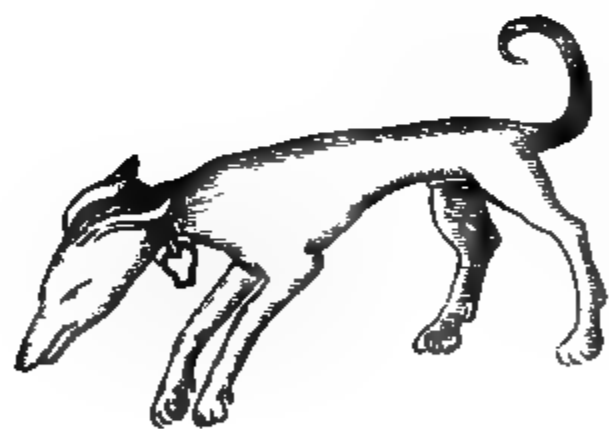
*Ellesmere MS, leaf 152, back.*



**CHAUCER.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 167, back*





THE MONK.  
*Ellesmere MS., leaf 173.*



**THE NONNES PREEST.**

*Ellecomers MS, leaf 183.*





**THE DOCTOR.**

*Blechnum ME, leaf 187.*



**THE PARDONER.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 162.*



THE WYF OF BATHE.

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 76.*



**THE FRERE.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 60, back*





**THE SOMONOUR.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 85, back*



**THE CLERK OF OXENFORD.**

*Ellenore MS, leaf 92.*



**THE MERCHANT.**

*Manuscript MS., leaf 100, back.*



**THE SQUIRE.**

*Wiltshire MS, leaf 119, back.*





**THE FRANKLIN.**

*Elcomere MS, leaf 137, back.*



**THE SECOND NUN.**

*Blissmore MS, leaf 191.*



**THE CANON'S YEOMAN.**

*Blechnere MS, leaf 190.*



**THE MANCIPLE.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 287.*





**THE PARSON.**

*Ellesmere MS, leaf 210, back.*

[These coloured figures in the Ellesmere MS have evidently been drawn by two different persons. The little pieces of ground on which the later hand places his figures, mark those done by him.

His drawing is not so good as the first hand's; and his colours are badly ground, and of poor quality.—W. H. HOOPER.]



4.

DRAWINGS OF  
6 TELLERS OF 6 CANTERBURY TALES  
AND 6 ALLEGORICAL FIGURES  
FOR THE *PARSON'S TALE*

(BRING ALL THAT WERE NOT CUT OUT OF THE MS. BY SOME SCOUNDREL).

COPIED FROM MS. Gg. 4. 27, IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, CAMBR.

AND CUT ON WOOD BY

MR W. H. HOOPER.

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1. REEVE.    2. COOK.    3. WIFE OF BATH.    4. PARDONER.  
5. MONK.    6. MANCIPLE.

*ALLEGORICAL FIGURES.*

7, 8. ENVY AND CHARITY.    9, 10. GLUTTONY AND ABSTINENCE.  
11, 12. LECHERY AND CHASTITY.



**THE REEVE.**

*MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 190.*



**THE COOK OF LONDON**  
(with a raw on his Horse's ribs).

*MS. Op. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 192, back.*





**THE WIFE OF BATH.**

***MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 222.***



**THE PARDONER**  
**(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).**

*MS. Gg. 4. 37, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 306.*







**THE PARDONER**  
**(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).**

*MS. Op. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 386.*





**THE PARDONER**  
**(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).**

*MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 306.*



**THE PARDONER**  
**(with a Jawbone instead of a Sheep's Shoulderbone).**

*MS. Og. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 306.*



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**THE MONK**  
(without his Bells and Hounds).  
*MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 332.*



**THE MANCIPLE.**

*MS. Gg. 4. 37, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 89b.*





7-2

ENVY

(on his Wolf gnawing a Bone)

CHARITY

(with her wingd and flaming Heart).

*Parson's Tale.*

*MS. Og. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 416.*



**GLUTTONY AND ABSTINENCE. *Parson's Tale.***

*MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 432.*



LECHERY (with her Goat and Sparrow), and CHASTITY (trampling on the  
Dragon of Lust). *Parson's Tale.*

*MS. Gg. 4. 27, Univ. Libr. Cambr., leaf 433.*



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